

Aristotle's Ethics

A course given in the Winter and Spring of 1968

at

Claremont Men's College

by

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Lecture I
Aristotle's Ethics, February 12, 1968

Strauss: The subject of this course has been called "The Ethical Foundations of Politics." The manner of treatment is that we will study together Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, in order to learn something from him about it. Now why do we choose this subject and this manner of treatment?

In the first place, this is a serious issue which is indicated by the expression, "the ethical foundations of politics." Let us not take anything for granted. In the present-day discussions about the war in Vietnam, you hear arguments both for and against the war on grounds of expediency. But you hear also arguments on grounds -- for or against the war, on grounds of morality or immorality, justice or injustice as well. This would seem to show that there is an issue here, the ethical foundations of politics. The general question of course has nothing to do with the war in Vietnam in particular, but means, must politics have an ethical foundation or not? It is by no means evident that it must have.

In order to avoid entanglements in present-day controversy, I will read to you a few sentences about a foreign statesman, a German statesman as a matter of fact, called Bismarck. I read from a book about him by an historian called Eyck, not to be mistaken with the former President. He was certainly the most passionate advocate of Prussian ascendancy. After an interview with Bismarck in the last days before the war of '66, he confessed that he was very much impressed by Bismarck's personality but he added . . . "Of the moral powers in the world he has not the slightest notion." Of the same Bismarck an English journal, The Spectator, wrote: "The man's policy is detestable, but his objects are great, his plans adequate, and his ability marvellous."

So I think that is an illustration, among many illustrations which one could give, of the questions with which we are concerned. The question applies most vividly to foreign affairs, but also to domestic affairs as well.

There are two fundamental alternatives which are popularly known, the one being Machiavellianism, which can be said to be the view that there are no moral foundations of politics, and the anti-Machiavellian view. In this case we do not have a single name as in the case of Machiavelli. There is no such classic of the good view. But Thomas Paine in this country and Kant in Germany would perhaps be the most famous representatives of the anti-Machiavellian view in modern times.

Now the Machiavellians of today, which you may even find on campuses, are likely to reject anti-Machiavellianism as an ideology, to say that the only non-ideological approach is of course to forget about such nonsense as morality. But this is not a very good argument,

because the same would be true of Machiavellianism, namely, that it too is an ideology -- the reason being that Machiavellianism asserts in fact, Don't pay any attention to morality -- which is a negative ought. But according to the view now prevailing, all oughts, positive or negative, cannot be rationally established, but have the character of value judgments. So we cannot leave it at this view, that anti-Machiavellianism is an ideology.

I come to a more serious question. Why do we speak of ethical foundations of politics? The term is of Greek origin, and occurs in a way for the first time in Aristotle. The footnotes I will give later. But it is not necessary to speak of what we have in mind as quote "ethical" unquote, for that implies a certain interpretation of a phenomenon that need not be interpreted in this manner. I read to you a passage from the Old Testament, Prophet Micah, Chapter 6, Verse 8.

"The Lord has shown thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

You see here there is no word which could possibly be translated by ethical. The word which is most important here is the word 'good.' And that of course exists in all languages, including the Greek language. But between good and ethical there is a difference, and we will try to understand it. In order to find out what is implied when we speak of ethics, we shall study the earliest work entitled "Ethics" available to us -- namely Aristotle's Ethics. When the Greek language migrated to Rome some centuries after Aristotle, the word "ethical" became translated by "moral." Romans did not have an exact word for what the Greeks called ethos. Their word for ethos was a plural mores which as you know is still used. But ethics and morals have the same meaning. And you must not be misled by present-day American usage, by which a woman of easy manners would probably be called immoral by old-fashioned people, while a pharmacist who is not very correct would probably be called not immoral but unethical. It is worth considering how this difference between ethical and moral emerged, but it is of no interest except to say that it is uninteresting.

Now I have already implicitly answered the question with which I started: why do we treat our theme by studying Aristotle's Ethics? We study it not as historians or antiquarians, or merely because we would like to know something about another culture which is so famous, the Greek culture. But we do it for a serious reason, for a respectable reason. We would like to acquire some clarity, within the limits possible in such a short course, about our own premises, our own hidden presuppositions. More simply stated, inquiry of the kind which we have in mind, is an attempt to replace opinion about important matters by knowledge about them. In order to do this in a clean and clear manner, we have to know in the first place what our opinions are. It is not so simple that some pollster by just asking them could elicit them. Sometimes we have to make a genuine effort to discover our opinions. But when we

are engaged in that process, we see very often that our opinions are not just our opinions or those of Mr. X or Y, and not merely of him and his peers, social or otherwise -- but that they are opinions inherited from the past. So that in order to clarify these opinions you would have to go back to the past epoch when these opinions were originally founded, created, or formulated, or whichever word you prefer. Therefore as is shown by the mere words ethical and moral, which are not from today or yesterday but go back to centuries ago, we cannot clear up their meaning, we cannot reach clarity about our own self without going back for instance to Aristotle, especially in our case to Aristotle.

Now there was a modern philosopher who stated this view in an unusually clear manner, and that was Hegel. In the preface to his book called The Phenomenology of the Mind, I will read to you.

The manner of study in ancient times is distinct from that of modern times, in that the former consisted in the veritable training and perfecting of the natural consciousness -- [natural means untrained here] -- trying its powers at each part of its life severally, and philosophizing about everything it came across. The natural consciousness -- [the pre-philosophic consciousness, you might say] -- transformed itself into a universality of abstract understanding, which was active in every matter and in every respect. In modern times, however, the individual finds the abstract form, the concept, ready made.

In modern times, from the very beginning of modernity, the concepts, the fundamental concepts, were ready-made. Their making, their genesis, was no longer a matter of interest. Everyone knew there was such a thing as nature, for example; why should we worry about that? Only Aristotle, who was a great authority up to this point, made some gross blunders in this respect which must be corrected. But that there is such a thing as nature goes without saying. In other words, one of the greatest discoveries or inventions that the human mind ever made, the discovery or invention of nature, was disregarded as irrelevant and immense problems were thus swept under the rug.

Now Hegel makes here a remark, as you have seen, about the difference between modern times and ancient times, and a certain superiority of ancient times. The ancient philosophers began from scratch, at the beginning. Not at the beginning of human thought -- they always had this human thought before philosophy -- but at the beginnings of philosophic thought. Modern philosophy, however technical and sophisticated it may claim to be, is the heir to the tremendous work done in the philosophy of antiquity. These modern achievements, however great they may be, have a peculiarly derivative character, compared with the primary character of classical thought.

We would see in reading Aristotle's Ethics, and would see perhaps more clearly from reading his Politics, that the amount of technical terms

found in any other modern book, and Aristotle is already rather late in Greek philosophy, after Plato and others. I think it is necessary as a first step if we want to understand a line of Aristotle, to have some notion -- supervicial, yes, but also more or less concrete -- of this enormous difference between the modern and the ancients.

At the end of the seventeenth century, there was a famous controversy in Western Europe, in France and England in particular, called the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. That was partly a very silly quarrel, as all such quarrels are, when they come into the wrong hands, if I may say so. But you must not forget one great book in the English language, the work of Jonathan Swift, which shows that it can also fall into the right hands. And the seeming issue is whether Corneille or Racine or Dryden, for that matter, is as good a tragic poet or perhaps even a better tragic poet than Sophocles or Euripides? This is a part of the story; but the interesting part of it was of course not dramatic or epic poetry, but philosophy, or what at that time was the same thing: is Aristotle's physics the right teaching or is the Cartesian-Newtonian physics? A radical, fundamental difference between two ways of looking at all things.

Now, if we do not know of this, if we do not reflect on this from the very beginning, we will read Aristotle with our modern language and that is inevitable, especially for those who are unable to turn from the translations to the original. Because the translators are of course modern men, naturally, and they think it is their first duty to make Aristotle intelligible to modern readers immediately. That is not so simple, that they should make him intelligible to modern readers. This requires some precautionary measures which they do not usually take.

Now I begin in a bureaucratic manner, which I find is sometimes very good to gain provisional clarity. We shall start by contrasting the ancient, in particular the Aristotelian division of philosophy, with the one prevailing today. And then we will begin to understand what we are studying.

Aristotle's division of philosophy is this: there is first a preamble, or prelude, called logic. Then there are two parts: one is called theoretical sciences, and the other is called practical sciences. The theoretical sciences are divided into three, called mathematics, physics, and let us call the third theology. The more common traditional name was metaphysics. And practical sciences, ethics, economics, and politics. Now it is important to know this also for the reason that we are trying to understand Aristotle's Ethics, and we must know what precisely is the place which it occupies within the whole of Aristotle's thought. We get a notion from this: it is the first of the practical sciences. The general view of Aristotle, I would like to underline right away, is that the theoretical sciences are higher in rank than the practical sciences.

This is especially true of the highest of the theoretical sciences, physics and metaphysics, that they are much higher in rank than any practical science. We will come across this again as we go on.

Now when we turn to the view now prevailing, I ventured to take the catalogues of the colleges around here, Claremont, Pomona, and so on. Permit me to read to you -- that is after all objective evidence. There was no attempt made, of course, to print them in order because there are many different courses given. I will read to you. Ethics? We recognize that. Metaphysics? We recognize that. Epistemology? Not there. Logic? There. History of Philosophy -- not there. Philosophy of the Mind -- not there. Philosophic Theology? Yes. Political and Legal Philosophy? Perhaps. Aesthetics. Not there. Philosophy of Art, if that is something different from aesthetics -- not there. Philosophy of Language? Not there. Philosophy of Religion? Not there.

I could take also other authorities regarding the division of science in modern times, but I think I will stop there. I will only mention one thing regarding Hegel, since I mentioned him before. In his Encyclopedia of Philosophic Sciences, there exists logic, philosophy of nature, philosophy of the mind, and this is subdivided into morality of the state, aesthetics, philosophy of religion, which is not found in Aristotle -- and in addition, Hegel gave lectures which were not part of his printed works, on the Philosophy of History, which is not in Aristotle, and on History of Philosophy, also not in Aristotle. So that some very great, profound changes have taken place, and some of them we should at least mention.

One thing is most striking, and is implied in the data which I submitted to you. But I will try to address the question to you, so that we reach some communication. What is the most striking difference, overall difference, between the Aristotelian scheme, and the scheme prevailing now?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, in other words, there are quite a few things in Aristotle which are not in the modern scheme. But is not the converse also true? Where do you find mathematics as part of philosophy? Unless you say symbolic logic and mathematics are the same? Where do you find physics as a part of philosophy? In modern times? So the mere numerical difference is quite striking, but it is not illuminating.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is very important. And no less a man than Hegel has said it, especially regarding ethics: only in modern times did ethics become a theoretical science, meaning that up to say 1700 or so, maybe a bit earlier, ethics was not a theoretical but a practical science. But that is not the most striking thing.

Student: Could it be that several of Aristotle's divisions of philosophy have become empirical? That is, there is now a mathematics of politics, physics, economics, and so on.

Strauss: Yes, that is probably sound, but I take issue with one of the expressions you used, and that is empirical. That is one of these words which needs considerable explanation. But let me state it more simply: for Aristotle there is no distinction between philosophy and science. They are identical. There are other things that Aristotle calls arts: the art of the shoemaker, the art of the carpenter, the art of the dramatic poet, but they are not sciences. The sciences are part of philosophy. Whether these sciences are "empirical" or "a priori" -- that is, not a question which arises on Aristotelian terms. We must beware our complicating things by starting with modern terms which we have not yet understood. Now this is the key event, an event which is contemporary with us, affecting us every day, in every respect, one could almost say: the distinction of philosophy and science or the separation of philosophy and science which has taken place in modern times. This can be explained very simply as follows.

In pre-modern times, Aristotle was up to the 16th century in philosophy still the demi-god, but he was never uncontested. There were other philosophic schools. Now all these schools had a physics. There was an Aristotelian physics, a Platonic physics, a Stoic physics, and an Epicurean physics. There was not the physics, in the way in which there is the art of making shoes.. There were no different Aristotelian or Stoic or Epicurean ways of making shoes. It was left to the competent men to be the shoemakers. But as far as physics was concerned, to take this most important example, there was not the physics, but always a specific physics of a specific school.

Now this was vilified, not without justice, as a disgraceful state of things. The important questions, not those dealt with competently by carpenters and shoemakers, but which concerned the cosmos, would be treated in such radically different ways by different philosophic schools. And therefore they said, we must make a revolution. They didn't use that word yet, but they meant it. We must begin from the beginning, doubt everything, especially that terrible tradition represented by Aristotle.

Now that happened in the 17th century and the greatest name is that of Descartes, but also Hobbes can be mentioned. Now they made a new physics, which was much more mathematical than any previous physics had been. And this physics met with an amazing success. It culminated in the work of Newton, and it defeated all other physics in the world for good. Because the fate of Newtonian physics in the 20th century is only an additional victory of Newton, and not a refutation of him, because it is a victory according to Newtonian principles. Now physics became then -- to use a bad word -- metaphysically neutral. Forgive me, I will never use it again. But this is the first class. And that is of course a neutrality true not only of physics, but also of the other natural sciences, chemistry and biology and so on.

Now this was a science as distinguished from philosophy -- that distinction came out only in the eighteenth century. The sciences had then a character which the rest of philosophy did not have --

the sciences agreed, or at least they knew what to do in case of disagreement. There were other questions left to the philosophers, and there was of course as before a disgraceful anarchy -- the philosophers could not agree not only regarding the answers, but even regarding the questions. No wonder that science became the authority, and philosophy became disgraceful, a relic of an enlightened past, tolerated insofar as it was willing to be the handmaid of science, and quite a few of our contemporaries think that is exactly what philosophy should be, -- but all other parts of philosophy, all other interpretations of philosophy are as absurd as those of alchemy, astrology and so on -- only they appeal a bit more to the heart than astrologers and alchemists generally do.

But this surely is the great difference: the distinction between philosophy and science. Once you have this distinction, it is the merest step, which can be made by the meanest capacity without any guidance, to say we must apply the same distinction to politics. There is a political science, which fundamentally takes as its model the natural sciences, and that is solid and respectable, where you go out and ask people what they think about President Johnson and so on, and then there is political philosophy, and that deserves the fate of the other parts of philosophy, contempt and oblivion. Now this is in our age, since about eighty years, but more pronounced in this country after the First World War. There is a distinction made, with which you have all been made familiar in high school, I assume, that there is a sphere of facts, and that is roughly the sphere of science -- and there are other things called values, and these values, in the sense of evaluating, are beyond the sphere of science and are left to the arbitrary decision of the individual or of society. Therefore according to the view now prevailing, there cannot be ethical foundations of politics, for that would mean evaluating rational activity at the bottom of, or indissolubly linked with, the study of political science.

There are other points which one could mention to illustrate what I said. For example, aesthetics we said is absent from the Aristotelian scheme. Aristotle has written a Poetics which is the doctrine of poetry, of how to write, and perhaps also to judge drama and tragedy. But there is no aesthetics there: why is that so? Well, aesthetics emerged under this name during the 18th century in Germany, shortly before the great flowering of philosophy in Germany, and it led very soon to the view, underlined especially by Hegel, according to which, that which is by nature beautiful, such as the human body or certain breeds of dogs, or birds, that all natural beauty is much lower in rank than the beauty created by art. The common ground between modern aesthetics in its earlier form at least and what Aristotle and Plato intended was the concern with the beautiful. But in Aristotle concern with the beautiful had, so to speak, nothing to do with art -- I exaggerate a bit. In the present-day view, the concern with beauty is identical, or almost identical, with the concern with art. What has taken place is only an illustration of the fundamental change of which I have

spoken before: nature has lost the status which she had in former times. And what nature lost, man gained, and especially such men as those who produced works of art.

A similar conclusion would be arrived at if we would consider the fact that there is no philosophy of history in Aristotle -- or for that matter, in any other classical writer. History became so important because of a decrease in importance of nature. How these two fundamental facts I mentioned -- the decrease in importance of nature and the emergence of science in the modern sense -- that I ask you to figure out for yourself. I will only quote the remark of a very respectable classical scholar -- which I occasionally will -- to this effect: when the ancients spoke of natural science, the emphasis was on nature, natural. When we speak of natural science, the emphasis is on science.

Now I have hitherto argued on the basis of the premise that the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, this fundamental change in human thought about everything that has taken place since the 17th century, is decisive for an understanding of anything and in particular for the ethical foundations of politics. But is this truly the most important issue?

Let me return to the beginning of this lecture. I mentioned the expression Machiavellianism: the view that politics is incompatible with any ethical foundations, to say it very simply -- which doesn't mean that a wise politician wouldn't be ethical from time to time, of course he would. But this precisely is his unethical practice, that he is moral from time to time. Therefore as Machiavelli in his great clarity put it, he will use virtues and vices according to the circumstances. In some circumstances it is very foolish to be vicious -- virtue pays much better -- but in other circumstances the opposite is true, and then the conclusion is so simple that I am ashamed to spell it out.

Now is Machiavellianism, and its opposite which I called anti-Machiavellianism -- not much more important than the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns? And is this not an issue which is wholly untouched by the emergence of the modern mind in contradistinction to the ancient mind? Are there not in both epochs both Machiavellians and anti-Machiavellians? The answer on that level at which we ask it would be an emphatic yes, and you would know some examples -- do you know some Machiavellians in this broad and loose sense, in classical antiquity? I really would like to establish some contact, and therefore I raise this question.

Student: Callicles.

Strauss: Yes, very good. And another one -- perhaps the most important.

Student: The Melian dialogue.

Strauss: Yes. And on the other hand, we find of course anti-Machiavellians in classical antiquity, Aristotle perhaps the most outstanding of them, and in modern times Kant, and Thomas Paine, whom I mentioned before. Now this is undoubtedly true, that there are issues which are not affected by that fundamental change of which I spoke before. But nevertheless, there may be a profound difference between modern Machiavellianism and pre-modern Machiavellianism. And similarly, correspondingly, there may be a profound difference between modern anti-Machiavellianism and ancient anti-Machiavellianism. So Machiavellianism does not mean exactly the same thing when applied to Machiavelli or when applied to the Athenians of the island of Melos, Callicles, or Thrasymachos, and such people. Still, we must try to get a notion of what has not been changed regarding our great issue, in that great quarrel of the moderns with the ancients.

First, let me get rid of the proper name Machiavellianism because that would mean identification with this particular individual, and let me also get rid of anti-Machiavellianism. I think it is possible provisionally to call the one alternative idealism, and the other materialism, meaning this (because those words have many meanings): that a man who believes that there are ethical foundations of politics may be called an idealist; a man who denies them may be called a materialist.

Now what do we mean by these terms idealism and materialism in a broader context? There is one view, according to which man is the only earthly being that is akin to the highest ground of everything. Or, which is only a reformulation of the same thing, only the highest in man is akin to what is the highest simply. There was formed the view that the highest in man is the intellect and that the highest simply was the ruling mind. This a short time ago would have been called idealism.

The alternative view is then that the highest in men or man as such is not more akin to the highest than anything else. The view which you find not only in our time but also in classical antiquity -- the people who asserted that the ultimate cause of everything are atoms and the void -- meant and did not merely imply, but meant, that man's superiority, his intelligence, has not more to do with these true elements of the whole, the atoms and the void, than perhaps a stone or a dog.

In more practical terms, by idealism I understand provisionally the view which tries to understand the low in the light of the high. By materialism I understand the view which tries to understand the high in the light of the low. In other words, the one school of thought, if this is not too narrow a term, tries to understand behavior in the light of the highest possible human behavior; and the other in the opposite way, because it would say what is most common should be the key to what is less common. Therefore the most common, in the other meaning of the word common, should be the key to the highest.

In classical antiquity both parties agreed as to man's being a part of the whole of nature, even if man is its most noble part. Accordingly they said that the good life is the life in accordance with nature. Both schools said that, but the difference between the idealists and materialists is this. The materialists said the good is identical with the pleasant. Morals, as we would say or the noble and just, as they saw it, is only for the sake of the pleasant. For example, if you want to have sound sleep, you will not give false testimony, because then you may be disturbed by dreams of arrest, if not by knocking at your door. In other words, this view called hedonism, being the view that the good is identical with the present, or reducible to the present, was fundamentally and knowingly selfish, and in no way public-spirited. The alternative view, the idealistic view, was definitely public-spirited; and according to that view, the moral, or the noble and just, is higher than the pleasant.

The remarkable thing is that in classical antiquity only the idealistic view of the whole led to political philosophy. Only the idealistic philosophers were public-spirited. The materialistic philosophers were not public-spirited. Therefore they did not develop a political philosophy in any serious sense of the term.

Now when we turn to modernity (and by this I will come to a conclusion of these introductory remarks), the peculiarity of modernity as it exists from the time of Bacon and Descartes can be reduced to this proposition: while man is obviously primarily a part of the whole, he can become the master of the whole -- a thought wholly alien to the ancients. Nay, without human mastery of the whole, the whole is very imperfect. Think of all the deceivers which are produced without such mastery.

The condition prior to any human effort at mastery was called, in the practical seventeenth century, the state of nature -- especially by Hobbes in a beautiful formulation. We know how he described it: nasty, brutish and short. That is nature, the state of nature. And we make something tolerable out of it by our efforts. The depreciation of nature is implied in the human effort to subjugate nature; to conquer nature. The good life is not the life according to nature: the life according to nature would be nasty, brutish and short. The good life is the life in which we can preserve ourselves comfortably -- if I may use this expression phrased by John Locke: comfortable self-preservation. Very well, so nature is not good, it is a stepmother rather than a mother. How shall we take our bearings then?

Now the great event in the 17th and 18th centuries was this: to replace nature in its normative functions by reason, so that you get for example instead of a law of nature, a moral law, a law of reason, which is no longer a law of nature. The final step, which has been taken in the 19th century, and the dimensions of which have not been mastered out by anyone, is that reason was eventually replaced by history. That is, history takes the place of nature in its quasi-normative function.

It would be necessary in order to put some flesh on these bones to explain in greater detail the genesis of this modern attempt. But for this we would have to know somewhat more than we are supposed to know now, first of all, about classical political philosophy, and then about what the revolution or revolt against classical political philosophy by Machiavelli meant. There may be an occasion later on of course to go into this.

For the moment I would like to add one remark. When we see this question of the ancient and modern, we see immediately that the quarrel was not an event that happened in the 17th or the early 18th century, but is with us, if it is true that what modern thought aims at is to make man the master of his fate. Then the question arises, and it arises more easily today than prior to 1945, can man be the master of his fate in any serious sense? I mean not the individual of his fate within society, but mankind, man as the species, can he be the master of his fate?

That is a question for us, and when you look at the daily papers, and consider the possibilities of nuclear war and other things of the same kind which are partly available and partly will be available within a very short time, it is not so obvious in every respect a sound decision to say, let us increase man's power thousandfold, millionfold, and then he will be happy. Because power and wisdom are two different things. And while modern science and technology are wonderful in giving us power, they do not give us wisdom, and they do not claim to give us wisdom. I know that some of them write articles in the Sunday magazines, in their capacity as scientists, but their statements there are not scientific statements, but simply made by men who happen to be scientists. There is no connection between their human wisdom and their science. Therefore, to repeat, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns is at the bottom of all our problems today. None of these problems can be properly articulated, adequately articulated, without having paid due consideration to this quarrel.

Now this much in the way of an introduction. We should begin at the beginning of Aristotle's Ethics. I made arrangements that you should have copies today. I suppose some of you at least will have copies. Now how shall we proceed? At another place, where I taught formerly, I had an old student of mine, Mr. Rankin, whom some of you know, who acted as my reader. He had a very clear enunciation, and he read in a very medieval manner and I think it is a practical procedure, although it is medieval. I wonder if there is not here someone who is willing to do that service for me. Well, shall I ask you to do that? Good. Very slowly, and sit here. Now we forget about the introduction except occasionally to think about it, and begin literally at the beginning.

Reader: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and every pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."

Strauss: Good. Let us stop here. There are some minor corrections. "Every art and every inquiry, similarly ^{action} art as well as choice, is thought to strive for some good. Therefore people have nobly -- or rightly -- described the good as that for which all things strive."

So all specific human activities, that is what Aristotle seems to say, aim at some good. Or is there any specific human activity which Aristotle has omitted? Art, in the wide sense, where it includes also the fine arts. Science and action. What else is there specifically human which he has omitted? Could we quarrel with him on this point? We should think about that. That science, or inquiry -- inquiry means "the way after" in Greek -- pursues also the good, I believe is not difficult to understand -- the good being the truth.

You see, Aristotle is dealing with two kinds of things here. "Every art and every method, literally, similarly action as well as choice, is thought to strive for some good." He makes the distinction that on the one hand, you have art, and on the other science; you must distinguish between action and choice. What does this mean? He puts it here dramatically -- almost metrically. "Every art and every method, similarly action as well as choice" -- avoiding "all" but meaning it. What does he mean by that? In the first place, it is an indication of this great distinction between the theoretical and practical, although it is not identical with that by any means. Why does he make a distinction between action and choice? Do you have any action without choice? The choice may be foolish, but still -- must they not always be together?

I believe what Aristotle has in mind is that he wants to make a kind of parallelism on both sides. Two items -- art and science on the one side -- on the other, the outgoing, visible action; and the inner thing, just as science is inner -- choice. The Greek means preferring, preference. Choosing one thing in preference to another. But because one could say if someone chooses blackberry pie in preference to cherry pie -- it is also a choice, isn't it? One does not mean that. Therefore some translations say "moral choice." In order to avoid the word moral here, let us say this: Aristotle means by choice such acts with a view to which we are called noble or base. No one is called noble or base because he prefers this kind of pie to that kind of pie. But we do not have another word to use except choice here.

Now when he says "is thought to be...all things are thought to strive toward some good"-- the Greek word is normally translated by "it seems to be," but 'is' has a great range of meanings, from mere seeming to "it is held to be," which would still be seeming -- to a kind of expression of courtesy. You don't want to be too emphatic, don't wish to say "It is so" -- so "seems," you say. That is not a difficulty but the difficulty is this. Granted that all human pursuits strive for some good, does this satisfy our saying that all things strive for some good, as Aristotle seems to say? Man is obviously a being which acts, which pursues purposes. But do all things have purposes? Do stones have purposes?

Well, you know surely this much -- that according to Aristotle, stones do have purposes. That is one of the grave errors to which he is given. The stones, like everything else, are seeking their natural place. This theory of gravitation differs from the Newtonian one. Does it follow, when we start from the purposes of man, that all things are purposive? Surely not. Only under one condition did Aristotle make a case for this view: on the condition that man is the key to everything. So that even the form of a stone cannot be properly understood unless it is viewed in the light of human action -- human mental action.

At any rate, what the first sentence suggests is this: all, not only all men, but all beings, strive for the same thing, for the good. So there are no questions. If all things strive for the good, from a practical point of view there is no question. If all beings strive for the same, then this is the end of all effort. But then how does he go on? Read slowly.

Reader: "But a certain difference is found among ends."

Strauss: Yes, now there is a certain difference, one could almost say, discord, of the ends. So this beautiful harmony, that all things strive for the same, is disturbed by this discord. The ends -- that means the good things of course. Surely all beings strive for the good. But the good of the cat is not the good of the dog. Aristotle does not have this, merely this, in mind. But that is the general structure of the first chapter, that he gradually introduces us into the enormous differences and discords which exist in all the spheres of the good and the bad.

Reader: "Some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them."

Strauss: Now it is obvious he has in mind the difference among human ends. There are activities which are ends in themselves. Dancing need not have another purpose except to dance. Think of a ballet dance. But there are others where the activity is not an end. What the shoemaker does. The end is not shoemaking except in the case of some shoemakers. But the shoe. The thing separate from, a result of, the activity. This is easy to understand I believe.

Reader: "Where there are ends apart from the actions, it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities."

Strauss: Aristotle indicates here something of the general procedure in this chapter and to some extent in the whole book. There are a variety of ends. He has given us one specimen. But at least in one sphere, when the end is different from the activity -- shoemaking, in these things the products, works, are by nature better than the activities. You prefer the shoe to the shoemaker; and you have interest in the shoemaking only because it is productive of shoes. That is at least what Aristotle here assumes. So in other words it is by nature. There is a great variety of ends -- a confusing

variety. But there is also some natural order. The fact that shoemaking and dancing are different things is mitigated by the fact that in the sphere of shoemaking we know at least that the shoemaking is intrinsically lower -- by nature worse -- than the shoe. Of course a question is not answered: what about the order of rank between the two kinds of ends? On the one hand, we have the shoes, houses or whatever it may be, and on the other hand you have dancing and other activities. Which of the two is the higher? The activities as activities or the products as products? This question Aristotle doesn't answer. So we are truly at the beginning. Now let us read.

Reader: "Now, as there are many actions, arts, and sciences, their ends also are many; the end of the medical art is health, that of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of economics, wealth."

Strauss: There are also kinds of human activities which do not lead up to works, to products, and these activities are arts and sciences. One might perhaps translate it by knowledges to be closer to the Greek and to avoid certain connotations going with the present-day word science. Again we see a very great variety of ends. He gives here only examples which show the variety of arts as you see. These are all arts -- medical art, the shipbuilding art, the strategic and the economic art. Not all of them are devoted to a final good. For example, a man could say "Health is surely a very great good and I don't have to have a reason why I should be well." Some people would say that of wealth I believe. But regarding shipbuilding, all men I think would agree that the shipbuilding art is in the service of another art, namely the art of sailing. You build ships in order to use them. If you want a ship for a museum -- that is a special case into which we do not have to go here. So this great variety of the arts to which he points by giving these four examples is a very abbreviated indication of the great variety of ends, because there is nothing said about the variety of actions and of the sciences here. Now let us go on.

Reader: "But where such arts fall under a single capacity, as bridlemaking and the other arts concerned with the equipment of horses fall under the art of riding, and this and every military action under strategy, in the same way other arts fall under yet others."

Strauss: Here Aristotle shows again, proceeding fundamentally in the same way as before, after having shown the variety, the bewildering variety, of ends, the limits to this variety. The variety of the ends is somehow limited by the hierarchic order of at least some of the arts. Everyone will admit that the bridlemaking art is subject to riding. The horseman will tell the bridle-maker why he needs a bridle, and will give him the general idea. The horseman is unable to invent the bridle, perhaps -- or to make it -- but nevertheless the bridle-maker is the servant of the horseman. But the horseman himself is of course in his fullest form the cavalryman, and he is as such subject to a cavalry commander.

The cavalry commander, himself a big man, is still not the uppermost man; there is a man called the general who determines what things are to be done by the cavalry.

You see Aristotle speaks here no longer of arts but of abilities. The Greek word is *dunamis*, power, which is broader than arts. He says later on, every warlike action, and not every warlike art, and so he has in mind the full variety of human ends of which he had spoken in the first section. Now let us read further.

Reader: "In all of these the ends of the master arts are to be preferred to all the subordinate ends; for it is for the sake of the former that the latter are pursued."

Strauss: Now Aristotle uses here for the first time in this work a term which has since his time become very used in this peculiarly Aristotelian sense. Where he says "master art" is "architectonic art." Here we have one sphere of human activities, house-building, in which the case is particularly obvious that you have all kinds of people -- bricklayers, carpenters and what have you. There is one man who decides all issues in the last resort, and that is the architect. And Aristotle uses this word -- the art of the architect gives the general plan of the house and is superior to all other arts dealing with house-building. And he enlarges the meaning of that term. He would say, for example, that the art of the general is the architectonic art regarding war. The reasoning is this: the ends of the architectonic arts are more choiceworthy than the ends of the arts subject or inferior to the architectonic arts. Answer: what we choose in the first place, what we pursue, is not that there be a wall, or that there be a roof, but that there be a house. Therefore we may need wood, bricks, timber or whatever it may be. But we do not choose the house for the nails but the nails for the house.

There is an apparent infinity of ends, and therefore also an apparent infinity of arts devoted to this infinite variety of ends. In this variety there is order -- there is not a distracting discord and confusion but harmony. Now whether Aristotle can maintain this in the face of certain difficulties we must see. But the point of view from which he looks at this is I think very important. Aristotle starts from the great variety of ends. And then he turns as it were from the ends to the arts -- not the fine arts, although they are the most noble in a way but not the most important -- the shoemaker, carpenter, physician and such. Why does he do that, turn from the ends to the arts? Well, we can say that every art is a rational activity for achieving a certain end. So by turning to the rational activity he reminds us of reason and therewith of order. And then finally he will reach the point, very soon in fact, where he will assert or almost assert that this architectonic structure which we see so easily in the case of the architect proper and the general -- that this kind of subordination and superordination (let us assume there are four or five more such arts) which Aristotle now proposes will be one super architectonic

art which ultimately controls all other arts. And what do you think is this super art of human arts?

Student: God?

Strauss: Politics! Because everything that is done in a political society is directly or indirectly subject to the political society. The architect of course has to listen to what laws regarding housebuilding say. The general has of course to be subject to political authority as we all know too well. And the one who said "God" did not say the wrong thing. She went too fast. We are speaking here of the human activity. And the roof there is the political art. But the human things are only part of the whole. And the question arises, is there not a kind of architect of the whole? And that would be -- one could not but call God. That is perfectly sensible -- there is only one objection in this case and that is that according to Aristotle the cosmos is eternal and since it is eternal it cannot have a maker, an architect. But within limits Aristotle can speak of that.

Now I would like to find out whether you have any questions, protests?

Student: In your conception of the state of nature, you referred to Hobbes as an example. What would Rousseau say about that?

Strauss: Good point. Rousseau is so well-known because he has taught the goodness of nature. Man is good; man is by nature good. Is that what you mean? Well, I give you an answer which cannot satisfy you. But a satisfactory answer would require at least a half hour exposition which I cannot do now. Rousseau represents in a very important part of his work an objection to Hobbes and Locke. Therefore the Hobbes solution was this: the state of nature was terrible and so let us be obedient subjects of any power that is. That is Hobbes' teaching. And protected by the king over any other sovereign, let us comfortably preserve ourselves. Now Rousseau loathed this notion; that is the view which he almost called "the view of the bourgeoisie" and he thought of the citizen as in ancient times. Therefore, to some extent Rousseau is one of the rebels. But a somewhat closer study of Rousseau would show that while he protests against Hobbes and Locke and the others, he in fact radicalizes the modern tendency.

Student: Since Aristotle is a student of Plato, the first thing you notice upon opening this book is that it is not a dialogue. Could you comment on why it is not a dialogue?

Strauss: I would say -- you mean, for some reason, or other, you have had a course on Plato before you had a course on Aristotle?

Student: I mean in a sense Aristotle is a pupil of Plato.

Strauss: Yes, but on the other hand, prior to Plato many men also didn't write dialogues. In other words, the natural way to write is to write -- to use a term which is not too technical, treatises. You just put forth in your own words, without any shenanigans, what

you think. That is what Aristotle does. Surely the Platonic dialogue is a great problem. The Aristotelian treatise as such is not. That is a man who has to teach something and therefore he teaches it. And since you bring up this question of the form let me say one point which I have made before. From Aristotle's point of view the Ethics is not his most important work. The Physics or Metaphysics are much more important. But I think the Ethics is his most beautiful book. You know the most important doesn't have to be the most beautiful. And I think at some point most of you will come to share this feeling, if you do not already now.

Student: You may think that although Aristotle saw a variety of goods in nature, that there was a harmony among the ends. But this means, for example, that if species such as human beings and bacteria are at war with each other, and until recent medical trends bacteria won this war, there is a change in the harmony.

Strauss: Yes, I will answer your question, but you could have chosen a simple example which I gave. The cat and the bird. The cat wants to kill the bird, and the bird does not wish to be killed by the cat. I think we can assume this fact; you can even observe it from time to time. Is there harmony? Aristotle would say yes, ultimate harmony, not that the bird ever likes it. But it is in a way (inaudible) that the cat eats the bird, because the cat is in a way a higher animal than the bird.

Student: If the cat is higher than the bird, and he kills the bird, well, if man is higher than these bacteria, he has to kill these bacteria.

Strauss: Sure, he does it all the time.

Student: Yes, but until recent medical advances . . .

Strauss: But I would not give such a pessimistic picture of the situation in medicine as it was until the late century. If you think of such men as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, they were not killed prematurely by bacteria. The Athenians had much more to do with that. And I have also overheard occasionally that the successful fight against bacteria and other nuisances has also destroyed certain immunities which man developed somehow without medical benefits. But the simplest example is this: think of cat and bird. What Aristotle says nevertheless is, surely the good of the cat and the good of the bird are incompatible, and yet there is ultimate harmony -- which we understand when we consider the order of rank of the various things.

The most important assertion of Aristotle in this respect is, at least among the earthly beings, that man is unquestionably the highest -- a premise which has been frequently attacked, but on which we act all the time. A simple example -- President Roosevelt in the Second World War spoke of the four freedoms, for example, freedom from fear. Do you remember that? And what did he mean by that? Did he mean that the tiger and leopard should be free from fear? He meant of course only freedom from fear for human beings. And if someone says that is only abominable human pride, that man thinks he should be something

special while other animals are not, then I would say --- is not the fact of foolish pride for the species not something which proves in itself the reasonableness of that pride?

Lecture II
Aristotle's Ethics, February 14, 1968

Let us remind ourselves for a moment of the title of this course. The Moral Foundations of Politics. You have been reminded of it by Aristotle himself when he says the true political man, as the true statesman, wishes to make the citizens good and obedient to the laws. The emphasis is on good because laws as we may know may be bad, and to make them obedient to bad laws is perhaps not a great feat of statesmanship. Now in order to see the importance of this statement of Aristotle, we have to compare it not only with Machiavelli, as we occasionally did, but I read to you a passage from Locke. Locke says "however strange it may seem, the lawmaker has nothing to do with moral virtues and vices." But he limits his function to the preservation of property. So in his way Locke is on the side of Machiavelli, i.e. not on the side of the angels. And Aristotle definitely is. This I think we should not entirely forget.

Now we began to read the last chapter of the first book last time. I remind you of the context. The highest good is happiness. And here there is this complication. The core of happiness is excellent activity of the soul. Happiness is venerable, an object of reverence, whereas the excellent activity of the soul is only praiseworthy, as we have seen. Happiness in other words is a blessing, whereas moral virtue especially, but all virtue, is not a blessing. You take -- as a simple case, you don't say X has something to be grateful for, he is an honest man. But that is supposed to be our will. There are certain complications here, as we know, on the basis of theology. Taking the simple, common sense view, it is just something which is expected of everyone and not something for which we are grateful.

Now after having explained this complicated difficulty regarding happiness, Aristotle makes a natural transition to virtue, because virtue is after all the core of happiness, and we began to read this chapter and I think we should continue and that was 1102a, 12.

Reader: "But if the study of goodness falls within the province of political science, it is clear that in investigating goodness, we shall be keeping to the plan which we adopted at the outset."

Strauss: So the study of virtue does not entirely depend on the result of Aristotle's definition of happiness. It is sufficient to start from the two accepted opinions which are accepted without discussion. First, that the political art is the architectonic art, and second, it is the work of the true statesman to raise the moral level of society to its highest pitch. Given this, it follows that we must study virtue, even if we would not fully agree with Aristotle's analysis of happiness.

Student: Does Aristotle say if here now? Is that a logical 'if'?

Strauss: He has said right at the beginning at the first chapter that there is a variety of ends and a variety of arts, but we see a highest art, the political art, and therefore we can assume that there is also a highest end. That was the starting point. He did not start from the premises, there is a higher end.

What Aristotle means here is this. The investigation of virtue belongs to the political art; then our investigation is in perfect agreement with what we said right at the beginning.

Reader: "Now the virtue that we have to consider is clearly human virtue, since the good or happiness which we set out to seek was human good and human happiness. But human virtue means in our view excellence of soul, not excellence of body. Also, our definition of happiness is an activity of the soul."

Strauss: Now this seems to go without saying, but one should not take too much for granted. The investigation concerns the virtue of the human soul. First, of the soul, not of the body -- that would be a matter for the physician. And the virtue of the human soul, because conceivably there might be virtues of the souls of animals as well as of a wasp, and this would not be the subject of political science, which deals emphatically with the human things.

Reader: "Now if this is so, clearly it behooves the statesman to have some acquaintance with things concerning the soul, just as the physician who is to heal the eye or the other parts of the body must know their anatomy. And more so, inasmuch as politics is more honorable and better than medicine. But physicians of the better class devote much attention to the study of the human body."

Strauss: Yes, now what does he mean by that. He makes the comparison first, in order to make this clear, that the political man, the statesman, should be more of the human soul. That might seem to impose an unreasonable burden on him. Think of many statesman who were very far from the political vein in any way.

So he compares the political man with the physician, the one who heals the body, not with the one who builds up the strength of the human body. So therefore traditionally ethics and even philosophy was called the 'medicine of the soul,' which cures the soul rather than that which makes it healthy.

It is not necessary that the untrained, or man is rich, but the physician has a much higher status than the gymnastic trainer. This is why he would compare him to the physician and not to the gymnastic trainer. There is one reason why he should compare him to the gymnastic trainer, as I stated before. Because the first thing is to build up the human soul, but not to cure it from the

diseases. But it's very simple. The physician is a thoroughly respected man and the gymnastic trainer is not. This is the first point.

But strangely Aristotle compares the statesman not with the physician as such, but with the ophthalmologist, with a specialist. Why does he do that? Perhaps we can say that the statesman deals only with a part of the soul, as the ophthalmologist deals only with a part of the body, and yet he has to have some knowledge of the whole body. I believe this interpretation is confirmed by the sequel. Aristotle makes plain that only a very limited knowledge of the whole is required of the statesman.

Reader: "The student of politics therefore must study the soul . . . "

Strauss: You see he changes it, student of politics, statesman -- whereas in Greek it is always the same word. The political one, literally translated, meaning the man who possesses the political art.

Reader: "The statesman therefore must study the soul. Though he will do so (inaudible) to politics only so far as a requisite for the objects of study which he has in view. To pursue the subject in further detail would probably be more laborious than necessary for his purposes."

Strauss: In other words, according to Aristotle, there is no need for scientific psychology. And you see the contrast with today immediately. What Aristotle says however is in fundamental agreement with what Plato says. Do you remember where Plato speaks about this subject? In a rather well-known work.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, and what does he say there?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And why is this not scientific psychology? Well, Plato speaks explicitly in the Republic somewhere of the fact that there is a longing away regarding the soul which will not be taken up in this work. It is a provisional study of the soul. The same is true for the psychology which Aristotle is now going to use. And which would have to be rewritten very radically in order to have it fit with the true or scientific teaching regarding the soul.

Reader: "Now on the subject, some of the teaching current in esoteric discourse is satisfactory and may be adopted here, namely that the soul consists of two parts, one irrational, and the other capable of reason."

Strauss: The word 'esoteric' -- what that means is controversial. It may mean popular, not strictly academic, scientific, and it may mean an external to the present study, for say an ethical study would be esoteric to physics, and physical studies would be esoteric to everything. It is impossible to decide what the word 'esoteric' means. If one could translate it by external, it is an ambiguity. External meaning from people who are not on the inside, and meaning the subject matter is not inside.

Reader: "Whether these two parts are really distinct in the sense that the parts of the body or any other divisible whole are distinct, or whether though distinguishable in thought, they are inseparable by nature like convex and concave sides of the curve, makes no difference for the matter at hand."

Strauss: In other words, here we have an example. The precise meaning of 'part' here, a rational and an irrational part, is of no interest for our present studies. It is sufficient that they are distinguishable from each other.

Reader: "On the irrational part of the soul again, one division appears to be common to all living things and of a vegetative nature. I refer to the part that causes nutrition and growth. But we must assume that a vital faculty of this nature exists in all things, that assimilate nourishment, including embryos. The same faculty being present also in the fully developed organism. This is more reasonable than to assume a different faculty in the latter. The excellence of this faculty therefore appears to be common to all animate things and not peculiar to man. For it is believed that this faculty or part of the soul is most active during sleep, but when they are asleep, you cannot tell a good man from a bad man. Whence the saying, that perhaps their lives, there is no difference between the happy and the miserable. This is a reasonable result, for sleep is a cessation of the soul from the activities on which its goodness or badness depend, except that in some small degree, certain of the sense perceptions may reach the soul during sleep, and consequently the dreams of the good are better than those of ordinary men. We need not, however, pursue this subject further, but may omit from consideration the nutritive part of the soul, since it exhibits no specifically human excellence."

Strauss: He speaks now of a part of a part, the part of the non-rational soul. Nutritive part. This is irrelevant as far as human virtue and vice are concerned. Because that is not specifically human, and therefore a specifically human goodness or badness cannot be found there. The man is not called a good man or a bad man with a view to his digestion. And therefore this is of no importance to an ethical study.

Reader: "But there also appears to be another natural element in the soul which, though irrational, yet in a manner participates in rational principles."

Strauss: Now we have spoken of this before, that there was such a part of the soul, which is inbetween the rational and the irrational. Where he said, 'this part belongs to the rational part', but now he says that it belongs to the irrational part. Now this is a certain progress of the argument. The first and roughest statement is to the effect that it is rational, because it has something to do with this. The more refined statement is that it is not rational, but it has a certain nearness to reason which will be explained in the sequel. The term which he uses here is quite strange at first glance. He says there is some other nature of the soul which seems to be irrational. Now that has rather here the meaning of a kind or a part of something natural, the natural sphere of the soul, the natural part of a natural being.

Reader: "In self-restrained and unrestrained people, we approve their principle or the rational part of their souls, because it urges them in the right way and exalts them to the best cause. But their nature also seems to contain another element besides that of rational principle, which combats and resists that principle. Exactly the same thing may take place in the soul as occurs with the body in a case of paralysis. When the patient wills to move his limbs to the right, they swerve to the left, and similarly in unrestrained persons, their impulses run counter to their persons. But whereas in the body we see the erratic member, in the case of the soul we do not see it. Nevertheless, it probably cannot be doubted, that in the soul also there is an element besides that of principle which opposes and runs counter to principle. Though in what sense the two are distinct does not concern us here."

"But this second element also is seen as we have said to participate in rational principle, at least in a self-restrained man it obeys the behest of principles, and probably in the moderate and brave man, it is still more amenable, for all (inaudible) is in harmony with reason."

Strauss: Now Aristotle gives here a third proof that such a nature exists. And the proof is the phenomenon of continence and its opposite, incontinence. Continence and incontinence are akin to moderation and its opposite, but they are different. And the difference is, as he alludes to here, that the moderate man has no bad desires, whereas the continent man has bad desires but controls them. And it is better to have no bad desires than being able to control them. That is at least Aristotle's finding.

Now there is something in man that is proven by the fact of continence and incontinence, because the incontinent man is also a man who knows that he should not say smoke and yet does. That's incontinence. The man who doesn't even have the urge to smoke is

one thing. So the incontinent man has this conflict in himself and this conflict shows a dualism of which he speaks. Reason is there which (inaudible) doubt, and yet something else which rebels against reason, or which may obey reason, and the fact that it may obey reason shows that it has a kinship which the nutritive part lacks. Digestion does not follow the command, or growing does not follow the command. It cannot follow commands, but this part of which he speaks now can follow in principle commands.

Just as the members of the body can obey the command of reason unless they are paralyzed, and then they can in themselves, but this paralysis is clearly a primitive form of the healthy condition and the healthy condition is obedience. The possible disobedience shows that it is not in itself rational, but it belongs to the irrational in a way which it can obey reason, participate in reason, but it is not in itself rational.

We praise even the incontinent man -- that is what Aristotle implies -- as much as we approve of the rational principle. That is to say, he knows at least that it is wrong. We blame him that he is in fact unable to obey.

Now let us finish and then we may have to call an end to the discussion.

Reader: "Thus we see that the irrational part is double. The vegetative part does not share in rational principle at all. The other, the seat of the appetite and of desire in general, does in a sense participate in principle as being amenable and obedient in the sense in fact of which we speak . . ."

Strauss: Obedient is too strong -- able to obey it.

Reader: ". . . able to obey it in the sense in fact in which we speak of paying heed to one's father and friends, not in the sense of the term 'rational' in mathematics."

Strauss: Here now he draws a conclusion regarding the bipartition of the irrational part of the soul. That part of the irrational which listens, which is to say which can listen, listens to reason in the manner comparable to that with which we are said to listen to our father or friends, as distinguished from the way in which we listen to a teacher of mathematics. Listening means here listening to the father as distinguished from the mathematician. Obey, being considerate, whereas in the case of mathematics the mathematicians think proper reason and proper listening is understanding and only understanding. Here, in this case, not understanding but obeying may be even disobeying, but the disobeying is not possible unless there were the possibility of obedience.

Reader: "And that principle can in a manner appeal to the irrational

part, as indicated by our practice of admonishing delinquents than by our employment of rebuke and exhortation generally. If on the other hand it be more correct to speak of the appetitive part of the soul as rational, in that case it is the rational part which is divided into two divisions, having rational principles in the proper sense itself, and the other obedient to it as the child to the father."

Strauss: So Aristotle repeats here what he said at the beginning. He said one may also say that the higher kind of the irrational is the lower kind of the rational. He said this at the beginning. You don't understand that? You have a clearly irrational part, the vegetative, say digestion, and then you have a clearly rational part which has the reason in itself. The scientific reason. And then there is one inbetween, which is capable of listening to reason but does not have the reason in itself. And therefore you can say with a view to its capability of listening to reason that it is rational, but you can also say with a view to the fact that it also has the reason in itself that it is irrational.

Reader: "Now virtue also is differentiated in correspondence with this division. Some forms of virtue we call intellectual virtue, others moral virtue. Wisdom and intelligence and prudence are intellectual; liberality and moderation are moral virtues. When describing a man's moral character, we do not say that he is wise or intelligent, but gentle or moderate, but a wise man also is praised for his disposition, and praiseworthy dispositions deserve virtue."

Strauss: Now here he makes the crucial distinction which is based on the distinction of the parts of the soul. The distinction of the rational part of the soul into one which is rational in itself. Another which is rational because it is capable of listening to reason. This underlies the distinction between intellectual virtues and ethical virtues. The intellectual virtues are the perfection of the intellect. Aristotle discusses them at length in Book VI. And then there are other virtues which are excellences of the part obeying the reason but not rational in itself, and these are the ethical virtues. The distinction is very obvious, although one need not know the technical terms.

I remember a remark about Perry Mason -- that he was sharp as a steel track and clean like a hound's tooth. That is the distinction. Because a man can have a very sharp mind and that is something admirable, but that is not a guarantee of his morality. Although he can be a man of perfect integrity, and yet he does not have to have a sharp mind. So these are two different considerations.

Student: Wouldn't there be any distinction between the irrational part of the soul which is able to listen to reason, and that part of an animal's soul, a higher animal, which is likewise capable of listening to instructions?

Strauss: But there is also a world of difference between an education of 'carrot and stick' only and an education of speech. I mean 'carrot and stick' means no reasoning is needed, no thought of consequences. But in the case of man, you can explain to him, even though you explain that if you act in this and this way, you will get the carrot, and if you act in the other way you will get the stick. You can explain it to him. Therefore the brutes have no ethical virtues. They have analogies to ethical virtues. We speak of savage dog for example and apply other ethical terms to animals, but this is not strictly speaking correct.

Student: It seems in a sense that this dual part of the soul is most characteristic of of man (inaudible).

Strauss: Yes. One can say that, and therefore the whole investigation here in the Politics is called by Aristotle the investigation regarding human things. The purely intellectual is also in itself superhuman, but the moral virtues are specifically human. He denies that the gods can have moral virtues, at the end of the book, because they do not have that part which has to be controlled and trained by reason. Yes, that is correct.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Very simply. What does it mean to obey one's father? The father says something: Do this. Don't do that. That's an (inaudible) and you must understand the (inaudible). First of all, you must understand that this and this is a thing which you should or should not do, and secondly the father will probably give in many cases a reason why it is good for you to do this. This is true for speech, discourse, reason.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: An example which Plato likes, taken from some verses of Homer, how you can talk to your passion, to your anger for example. That means it is persuadable. It is capable of listening to reason, and therefore it is not irrational simply. But on the other hand, that something else in you must talk to it. The anger doesn't persuade itself to cease to be angry, but , but reason tells it to cease, and this shows that it is not simply rational.

Another Student: Would you care to say that Aristotle did not consider a perversion of the highest part of the soul, a perversion of reason?

Strauss: That would be very bad if he had not done that. There were so many great examples of people who perverted their reason who had very powerful intellectual qualities. Take a man like Alcibiades. From Aristotle's point of view, perhaps also Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great.

Student: Yet how does a scheme of the soul such as he has over here, how does that take into account the possibility of perversion of reason? Because if reason speaks to the passions and persuades the passions, might not a perverted man's reason . . .

Strauss: Sure. There is no doubt about that that it could.

Student: Then ethics has no meaning apart from right reason.

Strauss: Yes, but reason can of course be perverted, and it can be perverted when it is in the service of something irrational. For example, desire for glory may of course pervert his reason.

Student: So ethics is meaningless unless it is taken in the context of right reason?

Strauss: Yes, sure. Reason can be perverted; there is no doubt about that. But what Aristotle has in mind is that reason in its highest form, theoretical reason, in the case of one who really understands it, will not be perverted. Someone may have seen that it gives a man great advantages over others if certain parts of his intellectual faculties are developed, but then he would of course think only of those advantages which he derives from his theoretical training, and not the following of the inner demands of the theoretical man itself. I think Aristotle would say that the perversion is possible in more or less the imperfectly theoretical man.

Plato seems to have the same view, because such a man like Protagoras, for example, surely has a good mind, but when you observe him in this dialogue, the main concern with him is to make a very good impression, and that is of course fatal when you cease to be objective, and you become concerned with yourself. Even if it has a more amiable form of shyness. That a man is concerned with himself but he will not embarrass others by speaking up. Does that make sense. The full dedication to the truth. That's the point.

Another Student: But Aristotle says that all men by nature desire to know about the highest part of their reason, but that's certainly not a desire that stems from this (inaudible) part of the soul.

Strauss: Oh, no. The most simple and crude form is curiosity. There are people who when they see something which happens on the road and everything which is out of the ordinary draws their attention -- good or bad, high or not, it doesn't make any difference. But even that that they want to see; they are interested in the novel as novel. This is something which distinguishes us from the brutes. And Aristotle only tries to show that if we follow the inner logic of this simple form of curiosity, we are eventually led to the highest form of human activity, namely to the highest form of the desire for knowledge, which as you know doesn't have anything to do with curiosity. But nevertheless there is some

kinship.

Student: But in terms of this tripartite theme of the soul, would one say that is the activity of the highest part simply by itself is curiosity leading to knowledge, or desire as well?

Strauss: Well, that is a very deep question of which Aristotle says very little. What the relation of desire and knowledge all together. Is there not a desire inherent in knowledge, as if knowledge is acquired on the basis of a previous desire for knowledge. Of course he assumes that, and in Plato the same question is raised, the relation in the Platonic language of eros to knowledge or science. But that is not the theme with which Aristotle's Ethics is concerned.

There is another point -- here we have heard for the first time the word (inaudible), in Aristotle's work, and this is the first ethics in existence. Ethics is derived from ethos. Ethos means character, and the primary subject of the ethics is character, i.e., good and bad character. Noble or base character. And since there are a variety of such characters, we should rather use the plural. Characters.

Another Student: At the very end Aristotle reconsiders for a moment the possibility that the rational part of the soul is really divided into two parts, and I wonder what the significance of that would be, especially in comparison with Plato's teaching of the soul. Is that closer to Plato's teaching of the soul?

Strauss: Which?

Student: The second possibility -- that the appetitive part of the soul is considered to be rational.

Strauss: I could not answer your question. It is a sensible question, but I could not answer it. Because the relation of the appetitive is very complex in Plato.

Student: Well, then I'll ask a slightly different question. What role does Thumos play a role here?

Strauss: None at all. He will speak later on, very shortly afterward, of the distinction between the style, the appetitive, and the spirited parts, the irascible. He speaks of it. But the distinction between these lower parts and the rational part is much more important for both Aristotle and Plato than the distinction between the irascible and the appetitive. The distinction between the irascible or spirited part and the appetitive part is less important -- I repeat that -- for both Plato and Aristotle than the distinction between both on the one hand, and the rational part on the other.

Student: It seems that this possibility just mentioned is precisely the possibility which makes this distinction unclear again, insofar as the appetitive part might be considered to be rational. Strictly speaking.

Strauss: It is not strictly speaking rational. If you use it in this sense, both Plato and Aristotle would say 'without the light of the intellect', they both need the light of the intellect on every level, and to that extent clearly the appetitive or spirited is below the intellectual.

Student: But it seems here that the implication is that the two are always together.

Strauss: But the question is how are they together on the highest level? In the case of moral virtues that has been sufficiently illustrated and will become very clear in the sequel. The question is how is it on the highest level? What is the relation between the desire for knowledge, the eros for wisdom, and the insight as insight. Do they not mutually crucify each other, as it were? This is a question which is harder to answer.

So we have now completed our joint study of the first book. I think without further ceremony we will turn to Book II.

Reader: "Virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction and therefore requires experience and time. Whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit, ethos, and indeed derived its name with a slight variation in form from that word."

Strauss: Now this is Aristotle's etymology which seems to be correct -- that ethos comes from the Greek word ethos, and ethos means habituation. And ethos is something which comes about through habituation and therefore of course through time. But Aristotle says the intellectual virtues need experience and time. Does ethical virtue not need these? I think what Aristotle means is this. Even the intellectual virtues need experience and time, in order to be acquired, all the more so and it is quite obvious of the ethical virtues. There is a remark to that effect that young people are not able to act perfectly because of their youth which means time and experience are needed.

Does he translate moral or ethical?

Reader: Yes.

Strauss: That is very confusing, because moral is simply the Latin word, Latin translation, for ethical. I think I mentioned before the present-day distinction used in this country between the unethical pharmacist and the immoral women. Those would be called unethical by the Greeks and immoral by the Latins.

Reader: "And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues is engendered enough by nature, for nothing existing by nature can be altered by habit. For instance, it is the nature of a stone to move downward and it cannot be trained to move upward, even though you should try to train it to do so by throwing it up in the air ten thousand times. Nor can fire be trained to move downward. Nor can anything else that naturally behaves in one way be trained in a habit of behaving in another way."

Strauss: Let us first understand that. Because ethical virtues arise through habituation, they are not in us by nature, and the reason is this. In the emergence of ethical virtue, we become habituated to act differently than we did before, but what is natural cannot be changed by habituation. Therefore, the ethical virtues and their bases are not simply natural.

Reader: "The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet against nature. Nature gives us the capacity to receive them and the capacity is brought to maturity by habit."

Strauss: Perfection would perhaps be a more literal translation. Now how does Aristotle know that the ethical virtues are not against nature? After all, you rightly cannot change the falling of the stone. Why does Aristotle know that the ethical virtues are not against nature? There are many doctrines, at least in our time, which regard at least some of the moral virtues as against nature, and there is a book by Freud about civilization, where it is almost suggested that civilization is against nature. Now how does Aristotle know that this is not the case?

Answer: Because he knows that the moral virtues complete man, perfect man. Against nature means against (inaudible), and is not against our grain that we should be moderate, just, brave, etc. We possess by nature the ability to acquire moral virtue. We do not possess by nature the power to act virtuously. This power must be acquired. Men have a certain latitude of flexibility which is as natural to him as fixedness is to the star. You cannot transform a Beagle puppy into a St. Bernard puppy, but you can make it housebroken. This is still more true on the human level.

Reader: "Moreover, the faculties given us by nature are bestowed on us first in a potential form, but we exhibit their actual exercise afterwards. This is clearly so with our senses. We acquire the faculty of sight or hearing by repeatedly seeing or repeatedly listening, but the other way around, because we have the senses we begin to use them. The virtues on the other hand we acquire by first having actually practiced them just as we do the other arts."

Strauss: Let's say the arts, but I think it is a slight misunderstanding of the Greek word.

Reader: "We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learned it. For instance, men become builders by building houses. Harpers by playing on the harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, moderate by doing moderate acts, brave by doing brave acts."

Strauss: So here Aristotle gives the second reason. We must always watch that, and the word which he normally uses is in Greek the word *παρὰ* which we can translate by futhermore or besides. We should always translate it the same way so as not to give the impression that there is a variety in Aristotle.

Now in the things which we have by nature, the potency precedes the act, if we use the highfalootin' language of metaphysics. For example, we have to have the capacity to see before we think. We have the capacity to hear before we actually hear. In the other things which we do not have (inaudible), namely the virtues on the one hand and the arts on the other, the act precedes the potency. This is a paradoxical statement, but perfectly in accord with observed acts we can see.

Take a simple art -- shoemaking. The apprentice, the moment he becomes an apprentice, simply cannot make shoes, and he acquires the capacity to make shoes through his apprenticeship. He acquires the potency by making shoes. Of course first, in a very subordinate manner, he will probably have to sleep in the workshop and things which are only very indirectly related to the making of shoes. But then he will gradually do some things more closely related to the center of shoemaking and eventually he will have learned to make shoes. But he did make shoes in different degrees. He made shoes and contributed to the making of shoes before he had acquired the capacity.

Here is the crucial importance of the term used by Aristotle -- the 'activities' as he translates. The activities. We have a certain general idea about activities or motions without making this fundamental distinction by which the Aristotelian teaching stands and falls. The completed activity, say the actual making of shoes, as distinguished from the acquisition of that capacity, is a becoming, a coming into being. The actual shoemaking is not a coming into being -- it is a coming into being of the shoe -- but not a coming into being of the activity. Is this clear?

Now if we apply this to moral or ethical virtue, what the apprentices do is not yet moral, but it is an acquisition of morality. So that they later on will act morally.

There is a little point to which I should draw your attention. That is when he speaks here: "the virtues we acquire by having practiced them previously, just as we do in the arts. What we must do after having learned, this we learn by doing, as men become housebuilders by housebuilding, and harpists by playing harps. In the same way by doing just things, we become just." When he speaks of justice, he uses 'we'. When he speaks of housebuilding,

he says 'they' because Aristotle himself would never think of becoming a housebuilder, but would think very much of becoming just.

Now he does not give an additional reason, but he gives an additional illustration of the same thing in the sequel.

Reader: "This truth is attested by the experience of cities. Lawgivers make the citizens good by training them in habits of right actions. This is the aim of all legislation, and if it fails to do this, it is a failure. This is what distinguishes a good regime from a bad one."

Strauss: A sign that virtue comes through habituation. Every legislator thinks in terms of such a habituation, and therefore it is unlikely that all legislators are radically mistaken regarding the most fundamental part of their craft. Here he refers to a distinction between legislation and regime. This is also something crucial for Aristotle, although he does not speak of it here. That is maybe the most important theme of the Politics.

For Aristotle, laws, codes, are never the fundamental political fact. Every code is the work of a legislator. The legislator, the man or body of men, who can make and unmake the laws, are for this reason not subject to the laws. (Inaudible) legislators will be subject as citizens, but that is another matter.

Now the legislative activity, the activity which causes the laws, which is prior to the laws, this nevertheless is not an undetermined, sovereign power in the sense of Hobbes, but it depends on the character of the ruling part of the society. So in other words, a legislative body will be either democratic or oligarchic or tyrannical, and therefore the laws will be either democratic or oligarchic or tyrannical. This character of the regime accounts for the character of the laws, which every regime sets up with a view to what it regards as the most important. It doesn't necessarily mean that every regime sets up the laws with a view to its own interest. But the most important part is that it sets up the laws with a view to what it regards as the most highest and most authoritative. Aristotle refers to this point here in passing.

In one sense it is easy for us to understand that, because the whole notion of rule of law has no longer the elegance which it possessed in former times. We are more aware than the 19th century was that rule of law should mean rule of good or just laws. And therefore -- one can still make a case for the rule of law, but it is unsatisfactory if it is not a case for good or just. I think we sense this more strongly than people did prior to the first world war.

Reader: "Again, the actions from or through which any virtue . . ."

Strauss: What he translates as 'again' is the same Greek word for furthermore. We must keep it in mind that this is an enumeration of reasons. It is of some importance to see that in order to see

what is the context in which a given statement appears, a statement which might be particularly evident and striking, and yet is not necessarily the purpose for which the whole thing is made, but only a context, and in order to establish what the context is, we must observe this partition.

Reader: "Again, the actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed, just as is the case with skill in the arts. The good harpers and the bad ones are produced by harping, and the same with builders and with all the other craftsmen. As you will become a good builder from building well, you will become a bad one from building badly."

Strauss: He uses the third person here.

Reader: "Were this not so, there would be no need for teachers of the arts. You would be born a good or bad craftsman, as the case may be. The same then is true of the virtues. It is by taking part in transactions with our fellow men that some of us become just . . . "

Strauss: 'We' now again.

Reader: ". . . or unjust. By acting in dangerous situations, and forming a habit of fear or of confidence, we become courageous or cowardly, and the same holds good with regard to our dispositions as regards our appetite or anger. Some men become moderate and gentle. Others profligate or irrational, while actually comporting themselves in one way or the other in relation to those passions. In a word, our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding actions."

Strauss: Now here he gives the third reason why virtue does not arise by nature. That is still the point. If it were to arise by nature, then all men would become either good or bad, or middling, whatever the case may be. But those that become either good or bad or middling, this is not simply natural.

Aristotle disregards here entirely a complication, which is caused by the fact that there are what are called later on 'natural virtues' meaning that some men are born with a disposition toward courage, and some with a disposition toward cowardice, but this is too complicated for this still introductory section.

Reader: "Hence it is incumbent upon us to control the character of our activities."

Strauss: To make the activities activities of a certain kind.

Reader: "Since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions, it is therefore not of small moment whether we

are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another. To the contrary, it is of very great importance or of supreme importance."

Strauss: Everything depends on the quality of the activity. From our earliest childhood on. That is another kind of conclusion from the fact that virtue arises through habituation. Therefore let us be watchful from the very beginning how we habituate our children, or ourselves.

Now is there any point needing discussion?

Student: I think there is a difficulty which Aristotle realizes perhaps in the last point. Not everyone who does what appears to be the best action is necessarily just, but if you were being trained or habituated justly, (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .).

Student: But capacity does precede the actual . . . ?

Strauss: No, at a certain moment there is a changeover from the coming into being to the actual practice.

Another Student: (Inaudible . . .).

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .).

(Most of the questions in this part are inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, Aristotle does not speak explicitly about this whole question. That is another characteristic of Aristotle. Aristotle is most of the time very clear and very explicit, and yet you see at once if you look at an account of the medieval discussions, which interpretation of Aristotle is correct, say the Thomastic or the atomistic, and if you look at then the Aristotelian passages, there are few pages on which everything else depends. They are very short and very laconic. There is one example in this book of great importance which we shall discuss later -- there is one page on natural right, and it is one of the most difficult passages in the whole book.

Now the question is: is moral virtue a prerequisite of intellectual virtue? We do not find an unambiguous statement of Aristotle. Either affirming or denying it. That is the difficulty, and so we have to use our own minds in order to solve it. When he speaks at the end of the book about the superiority of the theoretical life, he says of the gods (they are presumed to be by him of course superior to man) that they don't need moral virtues. For example, they are not just because they don't need justice. They don't make any transactions, or they have no desires for goods which cannot be shared. So that is a very long question.

Thomas Aquinas who knew Aristotle very well simply teaches that the intellectual virtues can be obtained without the moral virtues. There is one exception, and that is practical wisdom. Practical wisdom, prudence, phronesis in Greek, that is not acquired without the (inaudible) of moral virtue, but Aristotle himself says that in the sixth book of the Ethics. But the other thing, theoretical wisdom, this can be acquired without moral virtue. A man can be a very great thinker or scholar without having moral virtue. But the moment we say that, we say is it really true?

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The science of legislation is practiced by the actual legislator, but there is a science of legislation taught by a teacher of legislators who is himself not necessarily a legislator. This would be on a higher level. Now here perhaps we can discuss this for one moment. The legislator must be a man of great integrity, otherwise he will be swayed by sympathies or antipathies which make him partial, and he must not be bribed and so on and so on.

But what about the teacher of legislators? In his case he is not exposed himself to the temptations to which the legislator is exposed.

Reader: "And then our further study is not for the sake of observing, like the others, for we are not investigating virtue for the sake of knowing what it is, in order that we may become good, without which our investigation would be of no use. We have consequently to carry our inquiry into the region of conduct and to ask how we are to act rightly."

Strauss: The present inquiry is not for the sake of theory, of contemplation, as in other pursuits, say of the mathematician or physician and so on. For we make our inquiry not in order to know what is virtue, but so that we will become good. If this were not the result of our inquiry, our inquiry would be useless. Now this is directed against the Socratic view. At least against the way in which the Socratic view is frequently presented, and in particular presented by Aristotle himself.

I will give you one example from another version of the Ethics. Eudaimon Ethics, 1216b,3. "Now accordingly Socrates thought that the end is to get to know virtue, and he investigated what is justice, and what is courage, and every other part of what is virtue. And this was reason for him since he thought that all virtues are formed of knowledge, so that knowing justice and being just must go together. For as soon as we have learned geometry, and architecture, we are architects and geometricians. And as soon as we know what virtue is, we are virtuous."

Now this is at least the way in which Socrates appeared to quite a few men, and this is what Aristotle denies. Therefore, we do

not become virtuous by knowing what virtue is. Aristotle simply says what common sense dictates to say, and this paradoxical statement is not Aristotle but Socrates. What Socrates meant by it is a long question for which we don't have the time here.

Now since we study virtue not for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of becoming virtuous, therefore we first must turn above all to the actions, and see how these actions have to be performed. That is the point. Socrates was more concerned with the definition of justice, than with doing the actions.

Reader: "Since the actions as we have said determine the quality of our dispositions. Now to act in conformity with right principle is common ground, and may be assumed as the basis of our discussion. We shall speak about this later and consider both what right principle is and in relation to the other virtues. But let it be accepted to begin with that our whole discussion of conduct is bound to be an outline only and not exact, in accordance with the rule which we laid down at the beginning. Discussions must only be required to correspond to their subject matter. And matters of conduct or expediency have nothing fixed or invariable about them any more than have matters of health."

Strauss: He will then turn to the actions. How must we act, how should we act, in order to become good or to remain good. Now he said the actions by which we become good should be 'according to the right reason,' if we translate it traditionally. According to right reason, which is better than this translation. All human actions in order to be good must be in accordance with some reason or some account to be given. One can even say all bad actions also have some reason. The bad actions are justified by an incorrect reason. The good actions are justified by a correct reason. But there is always some reason explicit or implicit, present.

Now there is a correct reason also in other things, for example, the reason a carpenter has when he makes a chair in this manner and not in that. The characteristic of the correct account regarding objects of human action -- that there is no stability possible in this field, there are no general rules without exceptions, (inaudible . . .).

This is the beginning of the argument. What kind of account can reasonably be expected of our action? Can it be given in terms of universal rule, universally valid rules, or is the most that can be expected be found in terms of general rules which admit of exceptions.

Aristotle continues this statement about the limited certainty we can expect in this sphere, but nevertheless we must try to spell out what can be said about how virtue is acquired in general terms,

and the first thing which strikes us and leads to the core of his view is that we distinguish in our actions excessive actions, deficient actions and actions which are in the mean, and the actions in the mean are generally speaking correct ones, and that leads eventually to the definition of virtue -- the mean between two faulty extremes.

We continue this next time.

Lecture III
Aristotle's Ethics, February 19, 1968

(Note: This lecture was taped from the audience, and as a result it is not as clear as the other lectures in this series.)

Strauss: The peculiarity of modernity is indicated by its origin, namely its Christian origin. Now regardless of whether this explanation is correct or not, we cannot disregard it when trying to understand Aristotle's Ethics. The teaching of the Bible concerning human conduct and the source of this -- love, and God is a loving God. This we must never forget when reading Aristotle because there we find an entirely different account from the Biblical account, and if we try to understand this profound difference, perhaps the most important of all differences, we will unconsciously carry into Aristotle the views which are closest to us and by which we have been brought up.

Now let us turn to our text again, and remind you of a point which came up at the conclusion of last week. When Aristotle speaks here, in 1094, b11, the passage which we had read, the power of science stems from these things, (inaudible . . .), from the highest practical art, the political art. But what Aristotle does here is not simply the political art. Aristotle is no Pericles. Aristotle is a man addressing potential legislators. He is not a legislator proper. And therefore his Ethics is not simply a political work. This is also true of his Politics. But politike it is, or touse a scholastic distinction, his work is not simply practical but theoretical.

(Inaudible . . .) In ordinary life it is perfectly sufficient to say be decent, or courageous, or whatever the subdivision of decency may be, but Aristotle is very much concerned at finding out what precisely is courage, what is justice, which may be quite good for practical purposes, but (inaudible . . .).

Student: Would Aristotle's Ethics be more correctly termed a guide-book to political philosophy?

Strauss: No, I think it is more than that merely. It claims to have a higher dignity.

Now let us continue where we left off last time. Incidentally, who else had a question last time?

Student: Well, the question was, we noted that Aristotle says that political science is the science which orders all of the arts which are practiced in the polis. Thus all science is coordinated by political science. And we also noted that say today physicists are working in increasing numbers for the (inaudible), and there is an increasing subordination of science to political science. You noted there was a difference, and I was

wondering if you could explain this.

Strauss: Let's see. Aristotle has pointed out that the theoretical sciences are not subject to the political. Technology is of course not simply a theoretical science. For the time being, let us use the assumption that the political art is the commanding art regarding all arts in contradistinction to theoretical sciences. The theoretical sciences belong to a higher sphere than politics, and the teacher of legislators, however broadminded, could not ultimately describe what mathematics and mathematicians and physicists or biologists should do. For Aristotle, the theoretical science has a higher rank. But we have not yet reached this point. We are still sitting as good boys and good girls at the feet of those masters of those who learn.

Now up to this point Aristotle has spoken of the subjects of his discourses. Now in 1094b, 11, he turns to the manner. The distinction between subject and manner should be clear. Or is this in need of explanation?

Student: It means method?

Strauss: No, the manner. For example, you can treat the same subject in different manners. One for beginners and one for advanced students. In a popular manner or in a rigid, academic manner.

So he devoted about 39 lines to the subject of his discourse. He will devote about 29 lines to the manner of his discourse. You will see from this mere statistical fact that the manner of his discourse is very important to Aristotle. Very important to Aristotle, and now let us begin at the beginning of this section.

Reader: "Now our treatment of this science will be adequate if it achieves that amount of precision which belongs to its subject matter. The same exactness must not be expected in all departments of philosophy any more than in all products of the arts and crafts."

Strauss: Exactness must not be expected in all speeches as little as in all products of the manual arts.

Take such an expression as precision. Obviously there are ever higher degrees of precision and non-precision, and we expect different things of precision in different spheres. Now this precision or exactness is called in the old Latin translation, 'certain.' And in the latest translation, it is 'subtle' and it is interesting that the Greek word can be translated by certain as by subtle. This has for us an entirely different meaning, and is illustrated more simply by the example of Pascal, who opposed to each other the spirit of geometry and here geometry means mathematics, and the

spirit of finesse or subtlety, so here was a clear opposition at that time and it has remained up to the present day -- hence two cultures, the culture of subtleness and the culture of exactness. But in the original meaning of the Greek word, this distinction has not been as pronounced. (Inaudible . . .) What degree of precision is to be expected depends on the subject matter. For example, different exactness would be expected on whether one was working on marble, or on clay or on wood, and this also implies there are differences in the subject matter.

Reader: "The subjects studied by political science are nobility and justice, but these conceptions involve much difference of opinion and uncertainty, so that they are sometimes believed to be mere conventions and to have no real existence in the nature of things."

Strauss: The noble and the just things, about which the political art makes its inquiries, have great differences of one another and confusion so that they seem to be only by convention and in no way by nature.

Reader: "And a similar uncertainty surrounds the conception of the good."

Strauss: There is no conception of the good; it doesn't exist here. Why make things unnecessarily complicated merely to aid the appearance of learning by speaking all the time of conceptions.

Reader: "Because it frequently occurs that good things have harmful consequences. People have before now been ruined by wealth, and in other cases this has cost men their lives."

Strauss: Before now some men have come to ruin through wealth and others through courage, but let us not draw too much attention to that. The last part of the sentence is this. Everyone would say without trying to be subtle that courage is a good thing. Now look how many men have been ruined by their wealth. Is this not intelligible? Some people are ruined by their wealth, and some people have been ruined by their courage. They volunteer for all kinds of dangerous things and they are ruined.

Now what degree of exactness is to be expected in the present inquiry? Which is a kind of political inquiry. That is now the question, and therefore we must look at the subject matter. This subject matter consists of two kinds, and that is of crucial importance. The first is called the noble and just things; and the second is called the good things. Very much depends on your crossing this distinction. The noble and the just things correspond to what we would call the moral things -- the noble and the just -- and you can understand the difference between the noble and the just more simply as follows, although this is a very

provisionary explanation. The just things are in a way what is your duty to do, and the noble things are beyond the call of duty. This is not literally true, but as a provisional explanation and as indicating that there is still some intelligibility in this distinction to our way of thinking, this is a good example.

And the good things are the good things. The two mentioned here -- wealth and courage. But they are not in that way moral the way in which the noble and just things are. Regarding the noble and just things, Aristotle says there is a great variety, a great discord. This word was at the very beginning of the whole work as you may recall -- line 3 of the whole work, some variety, some discord of the ends. Here he repeats this. The great discord and confusion regarding the noble and just things. Only now does Aristotle speak explicitly, not merely of variety but of the chaos in the moral world. This you know of course through present-day relativism, and there it becomes a matter of course about which nothing has been said except to (inaudible . . .).

Now what corresponds to relativism in our age was in classical antiquity what we can call 'conventionalism.' And that is defined here, that the noble and just things are only by convention and in no way by nature. The difference between conventionalism and present-day relativism is that conventionalism is guided by the distinction in the conventional and the natural. Old-fashioned conventionalism admitted of course that there are things by nature, for example, to have a sane mind, a healthy body, and to have good friends, good children, good parents, without those things which are by nature good, which everyone in his senses would desire. Whereas whether there should be polygamy or monogamy, or whether there should be community of property or not, this would be according to the conventionalist view, convention. It depends on the society for which (inaudible . . .).

But there is a sphere in which no such human preference or tossing of coins is relevant, and this concerns the things good by nature. Nevertheless, Aristotle goes on to suggest, there is some such confusion also regarding the good things, but no one says, I note merely in passing, that the good things are good merely by convention. Yet we can say the good things are ambiguous. We think they are simply good. And then we find out that they are not always good. For example, wealth, desirable for someone poor, so that some people think if we had any money, everything would be fine, and they find later on that this was a delusion.

The same would be true, speaking crudely and superficially, of courage. Is it so wonderful to have courage and to face all kinds of dangers. There is a chapter in Xenophon's Memorabilia where this is beautifully and simply explained by Socrates himself to a young man named Nicodemus. For example, even wisdom, which was surely regarded by Socrates as a very great (inaudible), that even wisdom can be damaging. For example, Socrates uses the example of a man who was killed because of his wisdom. The Persian king wanted to have (inaudible . . .), so you know the good things

are not as unambiguously good in experienced people as we would like to think.

Now what is implied here is also that the good things as good things are also fundamentally superior to the noble and just things. It has something to do with that stated earlier on occasion diagrammatically, and I will repeat that. Here is the social scientist or whatever you call it. And here are the noble and just things. And then it is possible to look further here. And then there is another possibility. To look at this whole dimension from the outside, the spectator, and these are fundamental alternatives, and now the superiority of the good to the noble and just has something to do with this shift of perspective from this to this. This is for the time being perhaps wholly unintelligible. I know from long experience that a teacher must sometimes throw some seeds and hope that they will (inaudible).

Also, one illustration for the time being, which is not more than an illustration and perhaps a poor one. In Plato's Republic mention is made of the idea of the good, the highest thing. Here the good is said to be superior to the ideas of the just and of the noble. That is also Aristotle's view although he would not express it in these terms.

Reader: "We must therefore be content if in dealing with subjects and starting from premises uncertain, we succeed in presenting a broad outline of the truth. Whereas subjects are our premises are mere generalities, if we arrive at generally valid conclusions."

Strauss: Generally understood, in contradistinction to universal. So Aristotle begins to raise the question, after he has made clear that the subject matter of politics is singularly chaotic, disorderly, how shall we speak about it? In other words, we should be satisfied with rules of thumb, rather than with mathematical propositions. With quite a few if's and but's, and that means generally, not universally. No rule is here without exception.

Take an example. Aristotle makes this clear in his Politics that one of the fundamental (inaudible) of the polis is the distinction between the rich and the poor. A distinction which is so little peculiar to Aristotle -- for example, Machiavelli makes also much of this; it is elementary. Is this a precise distinction? It obviously depends very much on the total wealth of the society. And on the relative distribution of that wealth within the society. So that is not an exact distinction, and a very powerful one which you must never forget. Or take a good man, the man of integrity as he is called today, and how deeply should we look into his heart before we pronounce a man a man of integrity. So Aristotle says not too deeply. We judge him from his actions, and if he is as constantly behaved decently, then we pronounce him a perfect gentleman. As for his intentions, (inaudible) and therefore you can't say anything about them. But on the other hand, can we be satisfied with external

correctitude, even extending to our (inaudible).

Now since we start, in our present inquiry, from premises which are admitted only generally, our conclusions will be only general, as is clear. Another example -- generals should be men of bodily vigor, and in one particular case there may be an old gentleman who makes a much better argument than the young generals.

Now Aristotle goes on in this discussion. .

Reader: "Accordingly, we may ask the student also to accept the very excuse we put forward in the same spirit. For it is the mark of an educated mind to expect that amount of exactness in each kind which the nature of the particular subject admits. It is equally unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an (inaudible). Again, each (inaudible) correctly those matters with which he is acquainted. It is of these that he is the critic."

Strauss: Let us try to avoid technical terms when simple terms will do.

Reader: "To judge a particular subject, therefore, a man must have been trained in that subject. To be a good judge generally, he must have had an all-around education."

Strauss: So Aristotle raises now the question how to speak about the subject matter. First, he had spoken as it were of what the speaker, the teacher, should do. What the (inaudible) should expect in each case or each kind of case. The exactness which the nature of the matter permits. The extremes would be the mathematician and the (inaudible). In the case of the mathematician he would not be satisfied if he would say by God, that is so. But in the case of the orator, it might be very confusing if in a given speech he says so; I think if you would make a study of political speeches, you will see that (inaudible) or their equivalents are very persuasive. In public speech but not in mathematics.

And some of the jokes which Plato (inaudible) in his Dialogues he has questions decided sometimes by Zeus (inaudible . . .). We could have a modern example taken from Machiavelli. Machiavelli's Prince begins with a chapter which is rather dry and dull, a kind of scholastic division, and then it ends with a quotation from the patriotic Italian (inaudible). Now perhaps one could say what Machiavelli suggests is that the proper posture of the student of politics consists in the proper mixture of academic dryness and academic fervor. You could not use such a mixture in mathematics. But in a study of human political things, it would make sense.

Now in order to demand the right kind or degree of exactness or precision, one must know the nature of the subject matter. Or one must know the genus with which the science in question deals.

One does not have to be a scientist in order to do that. He uses here the term the 'educated man.' This particularity kind of second-hand with the subject matter compared with that of the true man of science, and the highest possibility on this level is the man who has an all-around education, something which we can no longer expect in our age, but which in former times was possible when there was much less specialization and much less focus.

Now let us go on. So Aristotle has stated here again in general terms the question, what about the spirit in which to accept or expect speeches? Now he turns again to the question at hand, how to expect of speeches regarding our present subject matter.

Reader: "Since the young are not good students of political science, for they have no experience of life and conduct, these that supply the premises and subject matter of this inquiry. And moreover, they are led by their feelings . . . "

Strauss: Passions.

Reader: " . . . passions."

Strauss: One could also say feelings, but the usual translation of 'pathos' is passions.

Reader: " . . . so that they will study the subject to no purpose or advantage and the end of this science is not knowledge, but action. And it makes no difference whether they are young in years, or immature in character, the defect is not a question of time. It is because their life and its various aims are guided by passion. For such persons their knowledge is of no use anymore it is to persons of defective self-incontinence. But moral science may be of great desire to those who guide their actions by principle."

Strauss: Of course, Aristotle doesn't say moral science, nor does he say political science. He says in Greek apolitike. /to which you can add the political art. It is not so hard and fast these things/ The translators are in a way compelled to do this. Now the proper (inaudible) of ethics are not the young. I can understand that all of you are graduate students and that all of you are beyond high school. Aristotle says those who lack self-control. And he gives two reasons. First, young people lack experience. And second, young people generally speaking lack self-control. They will not learn, they will not listen; their passions blind them. If someone has a very strong desire, then he will not listen to reasons which tell him it is wrong to desire that. I don't think I have to belabor this point because all of you are familiar with it.

One may say, going a bit beyond what Aristotle here ostensibly says, that the proper student must already be a perfect gentleman. Aristotle does not do the job which Plato or Socrates does

in the Republic on Persimonus, who is not a perfect gentleman, and doesn't claim to be one, (inaudible . . .). (Inaudible . . .) says I am not going to refute the immoralists, people who say the just and noble things are merely conventional. I don't talk to such people. This seems to be a very arbitrary procedure.

If we take a contemporary example, there is not much talk of freedom of love, I believe they call it, by which they mean sex with freedom. Now Aristotle would say, are young people competent regarding this subject? Can they know the grave consequences for the whole of life. Or to take a simpler case, where there would be no controversy involved, are three-year-old children competent to judge regarding matches? The point which Aristotle makes here, which I must emphasize, is the end which Aristotle pursues in this book, is not knowledge but (inaudible) He is not primarily concerned with reaching an understanding of the moral things, but with making, within the limits of the possible, making men better men. To make men more noble, more just; that is the end.

Whether one needs for this purpose an understanding of what nobility and justice is from the point of view say of an outside observer, we are not yet in a position to say.

Aristotle has drawn our attention very forcefully to the moral chaos which means in effect that people say that moral and just things are only conventional. One could say, in being harsh or nasty to Aristotle, that the moral chaos disappears or ceases to be terrible, by virtue of experience of life and control of the passions. Or more simply, we will only talk to people who have this disposition.

Reader: "Let so much suffice by way of introduction as to the student of the subject. The spirit in which our conclusions are to be received and the object which we set before us."

Strauss: What we have read hitherto what was only introduction. But first, let us have a discussion before we go on. This was a discussion indicating the subject matter and indicating the spirit in which it will be treated, in which the treatment must be accepted by the young.

There must be quite a few questions . . .

Student: First, a prologue also to the Politics, or is it only to the Politics?

Strauss: I would say only to this work, because there is a special transition at the end of this work to the Politics, and then there is a new beginning at the Politics. But since the two works belong together, you can say it is simply the beginning

to this whole dual enterprise.

Student: But I was thinking of your (inaudible) being the art of the teacher of legislators -- later on in the sixth book when he espouses politike alone, he seems to say it is a part of prudence. Would this politike also be a kind of prudence?

Strauss: Yes, but this (inaudible . . .). First of all, we have to wait for Book VI where he speaks of prudence and the relation of prudence and politics. And one which Aristotle does not develop there, as far as I remember, but which was developed by the scholastics of the Middle Ages, was this difference -- that the teacher of political prudence is not as such a political man. For example, the political man always has to consider the opposition; the teacher of politics in general doesn't have to do that. There is no opposition in that way. The scholars who contradict them are not in opposition at least in the political sense.

Student: But isn't the teacher of legislators in some sense a political man? Because he has to deal with particular legislators.

Strauss: That is a relative question. As a teacher of legislators, he establishes the principles of legislation which would be rightly understood as universally valid. Universally valid in the sense that he would consider the alternative, say this is the most desirable, this is the second most desirable, and so on. But he would not deal with Athens or Sparta, but with the kinds of regimes, and he could in principle be nameless, whereas an actual politician has of course a name and belongs to a city with a proper name and has to do with adversaries with proper names. This is understandable?

Student: Yes.

Strauss: In other words, Aristotle's Ethics is inbetween a strictly practical pursuit. A strictly practical pursuit is what Aristotle did in order to have the means of living, for himself, for his friends -- that's practical. But when he speaks in general about how to get money, then he is of course no longer a practical man. The economist, the teacher of the management of the household, not as such a man who runs the household.

Today we have the other pole, where the practical sciences have completely disappeared. Today we have a distinction between the theoretical and the applied sciences, and the applied sciences are sciences which presuppose the pure or theoretical sciences. In Aristotle the applied sciences (inaudible . . .). But for him what is decisive is the distinction between theoretical and practical sciences, and the practical sciences do not presuppose the theoretical sciences. There are also difficulties here no doubt, but *prima facie* this is (inaudible).

Student: It would seem that the qualifications for the good or only appropriate student of Aristotle's Ethics are conjoined in old men, since they have had the experience and they are also by nature less susceptible to the passions.

Strauss: May I suggest (inaudible . . .). If it were only for old men, it would be a pity. What did you mean?

Student: That's just the question I wanted to ask. It would seem that as men become more receptive to the teaching, their ability to improve their actions with respect to justice and nobility are correspondingly decreased.

Strauss: Because you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Student: There are other reasons, and also their active lives are behind them.

Strauss: Therefore I would suggest that they are old (inaudible) mature, and therefore your objection would cease to be valid.

Student: I'm not so sure, because in practice one cannot readily imagine a mature man who was busily engaged in practical activities. Taking the time out to read Aristotle.

Strauss: That is not true; I have empirical proof to demonstrate that. There was a very remarkable man, a more than remarkable man, in our age, Winston Churchill, (inaudible . . .), and one one occasion or another he gave (inaudible) this book to read. And Churchill was already at that time in the forties, and Churchill read it and said, that is more or less always as I thought. Churchill didn't say he derived any benefits from it; that he didn't say. But at least he felt that this made it explicit what he and some other men felt is a good man.

Student: But that's precisely the benefit that Aristotle is concerned with . . .

Strauss: Sure, but why don't you take people who -- there was an expression used which you surely have heard. People who mind their own business. By this is understood people of independent means or who had friends of independent means and who were without political ambitions -- that was what was meant by 'minding one's own business.'

If you raise the question whether such books are not wholly valueless, the question which Machiavelli raised in a way, when he wanted to do political science in accordance with how men actually lived, i.e., not as perfect gentlemen, and then of course you throw this book away; it's useless. But you will get into theoretical troubles by throwing it away.

At any rate, even if this Machiavellian view were true, it would be absolutely necessary to understand the alternative, otherwise we are simply blind followers of Machiavelli.

Student: It seems to me that precisely our view is one of seeking knowledge, whereas if we believe Aristotle, that view is inimical.

Strauss: The point is good; you can say that. In other words, we, especially the younger of you, are in a situation in which you hear two kinds of sides; on the one side there are those who (inaudible) more or less wealth, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; then there are the others who repeat more or less what Thrasymachus, and (inaudible) say; and therefore you or we cannot say we are nice people, and we will simply only listen to nice men. We cannot do that. The power of the non-nice people is so strong that we have to take this position of observing; that is true. But we must never forget that (inaudible . . .), and we must be careful to see what the advantages are.

Now let us go on and read the very beginning.

Reader: "Inasmuch as all studies and undertakings are directed to the attainment of some good, . . . "

Strauss: Let us stop here. Now Aristotle repeats here as you see the very beginning of the work, but simplifying it greatly, because he speaks here now only of every knowledge and moral choice. He does not make this division into four. We may use this occasion to say that in good writers repetitions are as a rule never literal repetitions, but always non-literal. At any rate, Aristotle continues, but he continues while repeating.

Reader: "Let us discuss what it is that we pronounce to be the aim of politics, that is, what is the highest of all the goods that action can achieve. As far as the name goes, we may almost say that the great majority of mankind are agreed about this."

Strauss: Let us stop here. It is settled that the human abilities dealing with the highest good is the political one, but it is only with the highest of the good things to be achieved by action. And here you see a distinction only between choice and knowledge. Aristotle takes now for granted that there is a single, highest good, partly on the basis of that parallelism between the ends and the arts. There is an infinite variety of ends. And there is an infinite variety of acts producing these ends. Yet among the arts we find a hierarchy and therefore we have a right to assume a hierarchy also among the ends. Moreover, among the arts we find one architectonic art, an art ruling all others, the political art. Therefore, we are led to assume that there is a good thing which is a product of this political art.

Another Student: (Inaudible . . .); in other words, if the hierarchy of goods can exist only if the men who seek goods are in effect sincere in seeking the highest good, does the classification work only with (inaudible).

Strauss: Not quite, but when you assume ordination of the art of shipbuilding or the art of sailing, it must be recognized by the greatest (inaudible).

Student: That's a very simple example; what if we take something more complicated? Two men differing on a piece of legislation. One says the good is A; the other says the good is something else. Is it fair to say that both actually have the highest good inherent in them. I mean they both may be wrong, but they must aim at the highest good sincerely.

Strauss: I would believe that you wouldn't attach this to sincerity.

Student: The attitude and the conduct.

Strauss: But since practical matters are of this great variety, there are not many cases where decent men can disagree, and that is here, and means must be found where disagreement leads to solution of the problem.

Now let us then continue where we left off.

Reader: "But both the multitude and persons of refinement speak of it as happiness, and conceive the good life or doing well to be the same thing as being happy."

Strauss: We knew that there is a highest good in this indirect way because there is a highest art, but we didn't see this highest good itself. Only its object. But regarding this object in the meantime, this consists of the noble and just things on the one hand, and the good things on the other, and there is great complexity. So that is not very helpful. Now Aristotle says for this it makes no difference and (inaudible . . .). There is a word which all men use for designating the highest good, and this word is in Greek eudemonia. There is a point which is not negligent, but of course not decisive, because it may be used (inaudible). The cleavage between men is that between the many and the men of refinement. But they all agree as to the name and they all agree as to this: eudemonia, having a good demos, is the same as doing well. There is an ambiguity of doing well -- you know, acting, or just faring well. And living well. There is no man with his sense who doesn't wish to live well, to do well, and to be happy. But unfortunately there is a great variety of opinions as to what happiness is.

Reader: "What constitutes happiness is a matter of dispute. And the popular account of it is not the same as that of the philosophers."

Strauss: The wise men. Now you speak of the wise men where before you had spoken of men of refinement or grace. Let's not make it too difficult. The two terms are synonymous.

(Inaudible . . .) what is happiness, and therefore you see this profound disagreement between the many and the wisest.

Reader: "(Inaudible . . .) identify it with some obvious, invisible good such as pleasure or wealth or honour. Some say one thing and some say another. Very often the same man says different things at different times. When he falls sick, he thinks health is happiness. When he is poor, wealth. At other times, feeling conscious of their own ignorance, men admire those who propound something grand and above their heads."

Strauss: You are all familiar with this view that man thinks at one time, oh if I only got rid of this thing, whatever it may be, that it is the only thing of importance to me, and then after he is well, he doesn't pay any attention to it.

The last point may refer to something like initiations into (inaudible) mysteries. Others have higher views, where neither honor or wealth is the thing, but something higher and grand.

Reader: "And it had been held by some thinkers that besides the many and good things we have mentioned exists in itself another good which is good in itself and stands to all those goods as the cause of their being good."

Strauss: This is a reference to Plato. There is one good thing which is the cause also of all these good things mentioned before, like health and wealth. (Inaudible . . .) gives us the opinions of wise men, and he reports here two kinds of opinions. Two faulty extremes -- the view of the vulgar and the false view of the wise man. The right mean is not mentioned here because he must show cause why neither of the two views, the two possibilities, is sufficient.

Reader: "But perhaps it would be a somewhat fruitless task to review all the different opinions that are held. It will suffice to examine those which are most widely held or that seem to have some argument in their favor."

Strauss: This is of course an absolutely sound statement (inaudible . . .).

Reader: "Let us not overlook the distinction between arguments that start from first principles and those that need two first principles."

Strauss: Why does he say first? There are so many principles around these days that you must make this distinction.

Reader: "It was a good practice of Plato to raise this question and to inquire whether the right procedure must start from or lead up to the principles . . . "

Strauss: Principles in Greek are 'the way.'

Reader: "In a race course one may run from the judges to the far end of the track and the other way around."

Strauss: Aristotle now gives the reason why one cannot give a reason for everything. And that is the rest of this chapter. There are two ways in which we can take this. (Inaudible . . .), down, and let us call this descent. And up to the principles, and let us call this ascent. And let us avoid these technical terms like induction and deduction which do more harm than good.

The question is which way will Aristotle go in his Ethics? Down from the principles or up to the principles? The distinction to which he refers here was made by Plato. It does not occur as far as I know in this form in the Platonic dialogues, but it has been a very common use of Plato in his conversations.

Reader: "No doubt it is proper to start from the known. The known has two meanings -- what is known to us, which is one thing; and what is known in itself which is another. Perhaps then for us at all events it is proper to start from what is known to us."

Strauss: This is a bit of a job. We, as humans, perhaps should start from what is known to the humans. We must start either from what is known to us, or from what is known simply, absolutely. The preposition used here seems to indicate that he will proceed by way of descent. He seems to replace principles by knowns, and drawing our attention to that, there are two kinds of things known. Known to us, or known in itself, meaning tacitly presupposed by us, but not yet understood in terms of (inaudible). But starting from what is known to us, it would seem to lead to what is known by itself. Starting from what is known to us, then means starting from the facts as distinguished from the principles or highest causes. Does Aristotle then say we should start from what is known to us, in order to arrive eventually at these principles?

Reader: "That is why in order to be a competent student of the right and the just . . . "

Strauss: Noble and just.

Reader: " . . . and in short of the topics of politics in general, the (inaudible) is bound to have been well-trained in his habits. For a starting point, the first principle is the fact that a thing is so. If this be satisfactorily ascertained, there will be no need

also to know the reason why it is so. And the man of good moral upbringing knows first principles already or can easily acquire them."

Strauss: Now Aristotle seems here to say no. Do not start from wrong facts in order to arrive eventually at the principles. For the fact is principle itself. Hence no need for the why. No need for the principles in the sense of the term previously used. For example, someone can say that it is sweet and becoming to die for the fatherland. That is an example of such a (inaudible). The well-bred man knows that. There is no need for any reason, and starting from such maxims, and perhaps even honesty is the best policy if you want, such maxims which gradually build up in a man through his education and his experience, that is all what is needed. In other words, what Aristotle seems to say is this. A man who sees the fact (inaudible . . .). The well-bred man surely knows that this or that is noble or just. But he does not know why these things are noble or just. More precisely, even granting that he knows why they are just and noble, does he know that they are good? That was exactly the cause of these bad guys, that they said there are noble and just things, but that they are no good.

The first question would be whether noble and just things are good or not. The question is will the well-bred man learn from Aristotle that they are good?

At any rate, Aristotle addresses only decent people. That was made clear, I think before. People who admit that men ought to be decent, or that decency is good. Does Aristotle buck the decisive question by not arguing this out? Does he argue, presupposing decency, and never go out of this? Perhaps this is necessary, and then there is a simple reflection which shows this possibility. A man, young or old, who raises this question, which theoretically seems to be (inaudible), why should I be decent?, has already ceased to be decent. So that to raise this question is incompatible with decency. We cannot have another priority. At a certain place there is a jump from neutrality, from non-decency, to decency, and a jump without which we could never enter this explanation. The situation is a bit more complicated than that, but still it is necessary to make this point.

And now let us read further.

Reader: "As for the person who neither knows nor can learn, hear the words of Hesiod:

Best is the man who can himself advise,
Be to his good who harkens to the wise,
But firm self being witless will not feed
another's wisdom,
But be worthless indeed."

Strauss: So there are three kinds of men -- those who know to their own power, and the second are those who listen or obey to him who has spoken well, -- this would be the perfect gentleman listening to Aristotle, and the third are the wholly useless fellows who don't know by themselves and who don't listen to their friends. Some of you will remember the three kinds of men in the Republic. What are they?

Student: The guardians, and the auxiliaries, and the working class.

Strauss: The moneymakers. Yes. Now the class of those who listen to him who speaks well, these are the gentlemen. They know the noble and just things through hearing, through hearsay, tradition, but this is not the highest form of knowledge. The highest form is to know it through oneself.

Now let us read the very beginning of the next chapter.

Reader: "But let us continue from this point where we digressed."

Strauss: Now we learn here that this was a digression. And as appears from the sequel, this remark about method, about the way in which Aristotle speaks and the hearer must hear, (inaudible). (Inaudible) is not necessarily something irrelevant or unimportant. It can be very important. Aristotle has three such remarks about how to speak and how to hear. (Inaudible . . .).

Now we leave it at this point. We have a few minutes left -- any questions, objections?

Student: I have a great misgiving about Aristotle's procedure in his restricting the variety of oral opinions by restricting himself to those who have experience in some control of the passions. I don't really think that this is enough.

Strauss: Let us take it more simply. If a man is in a state of rage, and he has just heard that another fellow has done something bad, and he is eager to (inaudible), is it not a well-known circumstance (inaudible . . .); must you not produce first some form of violence.

Student: I agree with that, but I think my question is a different question. Even if you disregard such people, and you think there are good reasons to do that, isn't there still a great deal of disagreement among people who have experienced . . .

Strauss: Yes, indeed. Pick an example.

Student: There are some societies in which the parents are proved dead, when they reach a certain age and are no longer useful. This is thought to be good, and is not thought to be wrong.

Strauss: Well Aristotle does not go generally into questions of such detail. You rightly imply it does not necessarily contradict the general notion which you would assume all societies have that one should honor one's parents, and then men know that the same will be done with them when they are old. (Inaudible . . .). But if a man says if it is better to have the parents put to sleep, (inaudible . . .), then it is at least respectable, and then the question would (inaudible . . .). There will be no killing of innocent people under any circumstances except accidentally. But generally speaking we say that parents are innocent people (inaudible . . .). Because these people, although primitive, to have these practices have reasons for them. Sometimes it is in the form of stories or myths. Well, it is our duty to take away the (inaudible) as scientific men.

Lecture IV
Aristotle's Ethics, February 21, 1968

Student: . . . that we have to know what the subject matter is first, before we can make such assertions.

Strauss: Well, do we not have to know what the matter is first under all conditions? It can hardly be avoided. I mean there may be a circle, but it is not visible in this passage. It becomes visible later on, and in a passage which we read last time but not in the one which you had in mind. And it consists in this, that the goodness of decency is presupposed. You have as it were to leap into the region of decency, and there is no reasoning, no compelling reasoning, which can bring even an indecent man to make that leap. There are some reasonings which make it plausible, but the decisive thing is not achieved by that. I advise you to read perhaps Book VII of the Politics. There is a very simple section in which Aristotle speaks about the reasonableness of plausibility of assuming the goodness of virtue and of the various kinds of virtue. In the section where he discusses happiness, that is a much more elementary and primitive discussion, but this has also some advantages.

Now you have a point? I still don't remember your name, but I know who you are.

Another Student: I'd like to ask a question about something we discussed last time, and that was the elaboration of the Ethics as a practical book.

Strauss: Yes.

Student: And the question I have is why can't there be or why shouldn't there be a strictly theoretical science of thought, and by that I mean -- say Aristotle would agree with the definition which you have given in various places, that the philosopher seeks to know the whole. Now why couldn't there be a science which seeks to know that part of the whole which is political by answering the question, say, what is the polis, or what is the political, or defining the limits of the political in a strictly theoretical way which would be practical only in the secondary sense, that this knowledge of the limits of the political would be practical, only academic. In other words, what you know would be the science, but that would not be its primary result.

Strauss: Yes, why does Aristotle not perceive it this way. Was it wholly beyond his ken, this possibility?

Student: It seems not to have been, because he was a student of Plato.

Strauss: And where do you find in Plato such a theoretical ethics, or a sketch of it at least?

Student: Well, something like the nature of man -- a purely theoretical view of (inaudible).

Strauss: Yes, that one could say. But more simply, in the Republic, when Plato discusses there the virtues, he speaks first of the soul and its parts, or of the city and its parts. That is the same thing, and therefore he is able to say there are only these four and no other virtues, because the soul has these three parts, and there must be a virtue concerning the soul as a whole, or the city as a whole, and that would be justice.

Now when Aristotle discusses the virtues, as we will see later on, at the end of this book, he enumerates a number of virtues, and never tries to deduce them, as Plato deduced them from the parts of the soul. So it is very easy to say -- I will tell you that it is quite reasonable to say there, but which guarantee do you have of virtues -- that your list of virtues is complete, which is after all what we as theoretical men would want. The answer: take it or leave it, or stated a bit more politely, show me a virtue which I've omitted, or show me that I unreasonably introduced one human quality and called it a virtue. And then you would be hard put to find any flaw in that. This I think is truly empirical. Looking around, seeing these kinds of virtues, some are even nameless. If the vice is named, there is by implication a virtue there, even if it is not named, but that is easy.

Student: I may run the risk of asking the question which you said we shouldn't ask, about . . .

Strauss: Oh, no, I did not mean it so literally.

Student: Aren't there some things in that list of virtues which shouldn't be, even according to Aristotle? Don't some of the moral virtues somehow appear say as vices, from the point of view of the theoretical virtues at least.

Strauss: Yes, but when does he speak about the theoretical virtues in this book?

Student: He starts speaking about them in the second book.

Strauss: Yes, but the full clarity about the relation of the moral and theoretical? At the end. So, in other words, the bulk of the book is written without articulating the highest human possibility. Needless to say, that Aristotle could not forget that for one moment. But he thinks it is important that one should see the moral sphere as it presents itself, if you are blissfully unaware of true bliss, of theoretical, contemplative, speculative bliss. And why did he do that? Why did he abstract the bulk of the work off the highest? Because it would naturally take away from the grace and splendor of these virtues.

Student: Well, why does the most graceful part come at the end?

Strauss: Because it is of so little importance to most human beings.

Student: But it wouldn't seem right to come at the end then.

Strauss: Well, in the first place, it is a general procedure that you ascend from the more accessible to the less accessible, and that such things, say like justice, and that this is a virtue and is very important, that is admitted by most people. And even among crooks, because they have their way of justice among themselves. So one could only say that they stop too early and draw the line at the wrong place. But there is some inkling that there must be some proportion between risk and reward, for example, which is a major principle of justice. So this can be easily granted.

But the theoretical life . . . we are of course spoiled by a tradition of many centuries, and take that for granted perhaps, although in modern times that was more and more questioned. In earlier times that was a very small part of the city, very small. If we disregard the common people, as Aristotle unfortunately does most of the time, and limit ourselves only of the gentlemen, even the gentlemen didn't know anything of philosophy. Think of Pericles' famous saying in the funeral speech: Philosophumen met'oikilias, we philosophize with grace, i.e., without abandoning ourselves. That is of course what Aristotle opposes. One should abandon oneself--not all men, but not all men are fit for it anyway. But this is an extreme possibility. Now that something can be extreme and yet the highest is I suppose known to students in Claremont from that famous scene in the Cow Palace some years ago. So I do not have to belabor this point. Now are you satisfied for the time being?

Student: For the time being.

Another Student: You said that the intellectual virtues came last in order.

Strauss: Well, in a crude way, because he speaks of intellectual virtues in the widest sense in Book VI. But the highest virtue, the highest perfection of man, the highest happiness, that becomes the theme only at the end of this work.

Another Student: From one point of view, and especially those who he directed his work at, in moral virtue, he leaves out something which is most important to theme, in a way in which philosophy isn't, and this might be . . .

Strauss: What does he omit?

Student: Piety, for example.

Strauss: Yes, all right. That is a very good point. Here you have made a point of great interest because if we take an enumeration of the virtues as ordinarily understood by the Greeks of that time, and we can see this from Plato and Xenophon and other writers, piety would be one of the essentials, and it is absent from Aristotle's list. A serious objection. Very good. But we have to go into the subject matter to see what Aristotle can do. I can give you an answer, a provisional answer. What most people understood by piety at the time was to pray and to sacrifice. Read Plato's Euthyphro. For Aristotle surely sacrifice had no importance. I mean except as a civic affair, you know, but that rich people put at the disposal of the community a couple of oxen or whatever it may be, and they had a fine and gracious festival. But he did not believe for one moment that the gods were pleased by that or that one could influence them. For Aristotle, piety we can say, the truth of piety, is knowledge of gods, and knowledge of gods is what he calls theology, or what was called metaphysics by other people after him. Therefore Aristotle has the reasoning, but you have to disinter that. And partly that reasoning you would find in that famous 12th book of the Metaphysics, where he takes issue with the popular notion of gods, and presents his theology against that. That would be an important part of the argument.

In addition, he has in the Ethics something which comes close to a discussion of piety, namely, sense of shame, at the end of Book IV, *aidos*, sense of reverence or however you wish to translate it. That is in a way the core of piety, and Aristotle says with amazing bluntness that is not a virtue. He omits the aspect of reverence which is only a sense of shame, that is to say, bashfulness. And he says, well, that is a good quality in young people because young people are bound to make mistakes, and then of course they should be ashamed of them rather than the opposite. But a mature gentleman does not make mistakes. He has nothing to repent. Here we are at the opposite pole of Biblical morality, obviously, meaning that there is no man who does not sin. Aristotle denies that.

Another Student: In the translation it seems that both the word 'science' and the word 'art' are used to refer to politics, but I believe you used another word.

Strauss: Yes, that is *politikē*. That is an adjective and therefore in need of a noun. If you wanted to translate it literally, you would have to say the political one, but what one -- is this an art or a science? And I believe the least dangerous and least prejudging translation would be 'ability', and that leaves it open, is this an art or a science or neither? I would then translate it the political ability, if the political art is too harsh, than to make up Aristotle's mind for him, which I think a translator should not do.

Student: What is Aristotle's distinction between art and science?

Strauss: Book six, book six. Well, very generally, art produces something, like a shoe, a statue, a drama, whereas a science does not produce anything. It only looks at and studies and follows. The mathematician does not produce triangles or circles, and the ones which he produces on the blackboard are of course not the ones which he has in mind quae mathematician. That is very roughly said.

And there is a third thing which Aristotle distinguishes from the two of them, which he calls phronesis in Greek, and that is ordinarily translated by practical wisdom. It would be simpler to translate it by prudence, if prudence had not undergone such a depreciation that it means almost the same as rascality. For Aristotle, prudence is something very high, and inseparable from moral virtue, as he makes clear also in Book VI. Now when he leaves it open whether politics is an art or a science, what he is playing with is that politics may be neither an art nor a science but a form of prudence.

But we cannot always run ahead. We must proceed in a somewhat more orderly manner, but on the other hand it would of course be very bad if I were acting like Thrasymachus -- I was forbidding to raise certain questions. I'm not forbidding any such thing, but I only say it is intelligible that some men would forbid some questions, for example, why it is intelligible why I am in favor that it should be raised, but it is of course a very dangerous step, because at that moment I join the association of gangsters. Why should one be a square?, as they put it in their elegant language.

Now let us proceed. I remind you briefly of the connection. Aristotle has found that there is at least one name used by all men for the highest good, and that is happiness. But that is about all, because then the disagreement starts, and the chief cleavage is that between the many and the graceful or the fine ones. Later he calls them the wise ones. The many say happiness consists in such a thing as pleasure, or wealth, or honour, and even today some people say a greater variety (inaudible . . .) now wealth is the greatest good and the next day he says health. Because in the meantime he has been restored to health, and he forgets about how much he has been in need of it.

Now this is one thing, and then there is another view to which he alludes, namely that some have thought that at the side of all these many things which are regarded as good by most people, there is one good, another one by itself, which is even the cause of the goodness of all the other things. So honor, wealth, pleasure, etc., are good only by virtue of that good in itself. This is a reference to Plato as we will see. In the passage to which we turn now, he will refute both view, both the vulgar views and the Platonic.

And now let's begin, in 1095b, 14.

Reader: "Let us continue from this point where we had to digress. To judge from men's lives, and not unreasonable conceptions of the good or happiness that seem to prevail among them, are the following. On the one hand, the many and vulgar identify it with pleasure and accordingly are content with the life of enjoyment for there are three especially prominent lives, one just mentioned."

Strauss: And the life of (inaudible), and the third . . .

Reader: "And thirdly, the theoretical life. The many show themselves to be utterly slavish, preferring what is only in mice or cattle. (Inaudible . . .) because many persons in high positions (inaudible . . .)."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. So the variety of opinions regarding happiness, it is limited now by a consideration not of the arts, as it was before, but of the ways of life. something very different from the arts of life. There are three most outstanding ways of life, and the most common view gains credence because some men of very high standards shares it. In other words, there would be no first glance impression. Pleasure would be the highest good, because of the lowness of the people who say that, but for the fact that we find some men of high standard, rulers, emperors, kings, leaders, who by deed assert that they share the highest good. But of course that is almost a joke. The fact that there are men of high standing who take the most vulgar view does not make the most vulgar view more respectable, in the eyes of men of judgment. If this view were correct, pleasure is the highest objective of life, and then a dog who has a good master would be happier than most men, which no sensible man would assert. And Aristotle was not sentimental regarding dogs, but of course no one dares to say that a merely brutish life could be a happy life. No one in his senses at least. Now let us go on.

Reader: "The graceful on the other hand and the practical think it is honour, for this may be said to be the end of the life of politics. But honour seems to be more superficial than that which we are seeking, for it prefers to depend more on him who confers it rather than on him on whom it is conferred. Whereas we suppose that the good things must be something proper to possess them, and not (inaudible) to be taken away from them."

Strauss: So in other words, the first notion of happiness which Aristotle thinks is worthy of his consideration is that according to which honour is happiness. Honour as distinguished from bodily pleasure. Clearly brutes are not concerned with honour -- and I say it with all respect to those of you who love dogs -- but they like to be petted, and that is not the same as honour. Honour cannot be happiness, since honour depends on the honouring man rather than the honoured one. A man may deserve honour to the

highest degree, but if noone honours him, he does not enjoy honour. And now we guess somehow, as Aristotle says we divine with an expression liked very much by Plato -- we divine, we have some inkling that happiness is something which cannot be so easily taken away and depends on the happy man himself rather than on others. If happiness were dependent on others, happiness would be the frailest thing in the world, much more frail than it is on any other hypothesis. So let us go on.

Reader: "Man's motive in pursuing honour seems to be to assure himself of their own."

Strauss: What Aristotle really doesn't bring out is this furthermore -- that is a favorite word with Aristotle. In addition, besides. He has n arguments without a systematic order of them. He just enumerates them. Someone says (inaudible), and Aristotle says no, look here and here and here . . . But Aristotle either doesn't think it is necessary or thinks the other arguments which he uses are sufficient. In this sense Aristotle is "unsystematic" and perhaps the most unsystematic of all philosophers. I would prefer to say he is "empirical." He likes to look around in all directions.

Now to the second argument . . .

Reader: "Furthermore they seem to pursue honour so that they will trust that they themselves are good men. At least they seem to be honoured by the prudence and by men who know them, and on the ground of virtue. It is clear therefore that according to them . . ."

Strauss: To them at any rate.

Reader: ". . . virtue is greater. And one might perhaps accordingly suppose that virtue rather than honour is the end of the political life."

Strauss: Now Aristotle continues his argument against the assertion that the highest good is honour, because this would of course be particularly attractive to to gentleman, and therefore he makes this clear why you cannot leave it at that. The concern with honour, Aristotle says, is in the service of one's concern with virtue. If a man is truly ambitious, truly concerned with recognition, he wants to be recognized for his genuine merits and not for qualities which he doesn't have, or actions which he has not done. In other words, he would be a ridiculous boaster. Therefore, not honour but virtue would be happiness. Or more precisely, virtue would be the end of the political life as distinguished from the third one which he had mentioned, the theoretical life. So this inadequacy of honour necessarily falls away from itself to virtue. This is part of the criticism of Thrasymachus.

Student: In this life then, how would you interpret the last passages in Book I when he talks about that happiness is in itself to be honoured.

Strauss: But here honour has a different meaning, and has almost the same meaning as divine. But we cannot take this up now. I only mention this, but it does not conflict with this here. Honour is a very dubious -- it is of course very desirable -- if it is true honour and true honour means that one deserves it, and not that one has a kind of clientele which . . . that is of course something which people regard as honour. It is mentioned all the time in columns or in newspapers. Because at the moment a man is dead or has lost his ability to charm such large masses of men, he will be completely forgot, like a beachcomber, of no interest. Genuine honour presupposes that one deserves honour, and therefore the crown of honour is that he deserves virtue.

Reader: "But even virtue appears to be a more incomplete answer, since it is possible to possess it while you are asleep, or without putting it into practice throughout the whole of your life. And also for the virtuous man to suffer the greatest misery or misfortune, and no one would pronounce a man living a life of misery to be happy, unless for the sake of attaining a paradox."

Strauss: Yes. Here Aristotle goes on and says well, we seem to have reached the end, happiness is virtue. But unfortunately difficulties arise even here, and virtue is inadequate for two reasons. First, a man could have a given virtue without ever exercising it -- for example, if he is always asleep, then he cannot exercise a virtue. Or to take an Aristotelian example, a man may have a true habit of munificence, but if he is poor, he cannot be munificent. That's one, and secondly, the man possessing virtue may live in the greatest misery, i.e. in the greatest unhappiness, and how can you call such a man happy? Now these are not the last words of Aristotle on this subject. It is only meant to show in a provisional way that there is a deeper question here which he must enter. So we learn however one thing by intimation -- happiness has something to do with the exercise of virtue, and not with virtue as a mere habit, which as such may be dormant. And this, the fact that happiness consists in the exercise of virtue, excludes that one lives in the greatest misery. To exercise your virtues, you cannot live in the greatest misery. If you are completely poor, if you are completely paralyzed bodily, you cannot exercise. Therefore, a certain amount of external goods, equipment is a good translation, is necessary for for being virtuous. That is a harsh judgment, but I think you would understand it. In certain circles, and as a matter of fact in quite a few circles, this is the view throughout centuries. That it is not the highest view of human perfection, Aristotle does not deny. The question is what is that which is higher -- the virtue which you cannot have except if you are wealthy and healthy and of good parentage and so on, and then there is the other virtue.

In other words, where the Bible puts 'love', Aristotle puts 'theoria'. The Bible and Aristotle agree that moral virtue as such, however important it is, cannot raise the highest claim, and coming back for one moment to an earlier question, why Aristotle speaks throughout the book of moral virtue and not of that highest, I will use a simile. The moon, and things which appear particularly beautiful in moonlight, would never reveal their beauty and their splendor in the light of the sun. Therefore, Aristotle keeps the sun in its state before rising or after setting, so that this moon landscape of moral virtue gets all the attention and all the respect which it deserves. Does this make sense?

So Aristotle alludes here already that happiness consists in the exercise of virtue, and therefore presupposes equipment, but it is interesting that Aristotle does not say it here. He prepares. First of all, he wants to shake us out of our complacency by indicating to us that there are great difficulties, and then only after we have become aware of the difficulties will we appreciate the answer.

Reader: "But we need not pursue this subject since it has been treated in the ordinary (inaudible). The third type of life is the theoretical, which we shall make in the sequel later on."

Strauss: Which we shall consider in the sequel. So only the theoretical life seems to survive the first critical survey of bodily pleasure, honour, and virtue. But again, this is not said by Aristotle. It is only a prelude as it were for us who have good ears to hear what will come later.

Reader: "Materialistic . . . " ?

Strauss: Money-making.

Reader: "(Inaudible . . .). On this score one might be seeking ends beforementioned to have a better claim for they are in joy for their own sake. But even they do not really seem to be the desired good. However, many arguments have been laid down in regard to that. So we may dismiss this."

Strauss: Now that is the end of this provisional discussion of the common views. So what he says here is a kind of appendix about the money-making art, and he rejects it as violent . . . violent here meaning against nature. There is something unnatural in making money one's happiness. A man who makes pleasure his happiness, or honour, is more reasonable than the man who makes money, because money is not and cannot be, or wealth in general, is only ultimately a means for the good life and cannot be under any circumstances, even the most superficial conditions, regarded as the end. Well, you can see it most simply I believe when you

look at a miser, and then you look at a man of ambition, even of wealth of the highest kind, and there is a certain attractiveness about that -- but the miser, there is something unnatural about him, who heaps treasures upon treasures and never uses them.

Student: (Inaudible). First he starts with pleasure, and then he goes to honour, and then to the life of contemplation. It seems to me . . .

Strauss: Virtue inbetween -- don't forget that.

Student: Virtue, and then contemplation, and then he goes back to (inaudible).

Strauss: That is a kind of (inaudible), we might say. He had spoken before at the very beginning of the work about wealth as one of these goods, and someone might say well, did you not say a word about wealth as the highest good, and then he says well that is so patently absurd, and therefore I did not speak about it.

So this is the first provisional discussion of the commonly accepted notions of the good or of happiness. And Aristotle turns next to a discussion of the alternative view, namely that good is something radically different from all these goods, and it is an absolute good, and that is the doctrine of Plato. Plato's doctrine of the idea of the good. We know of it as the Platonic doctrine from the few passages in Books VI and VII of the Republic. Aristotle had of course opportunities to talk to Plato and Plato seems to have given some lectures on the good. Plato did not write them down. They have not been preserved. But surely Aristotle had access to information which we necessarily don't.

Before we turn to Aristotle's critique of Plato's idea of the good, we have to consider for one moment that Platonic doctrine of which the doctrine of the idea of the good is the peak, very simply stated, Plato teaches that there are self-subsisting ideas and they form a kind of order, and at the top of it, ruling all, is the idea of the good. So if we do not have some understanding of what ideas in the Platonic sense are, we will be unable to understand what the idea of the good is and therefore we will be unable to understand Aristotle's criticism.

Now I will try to make things as simple for you as I can, and I take here a passage from Sir David Ross's Plato's Theory of Ideas as the retrospect where he summarizes the ultimate, page 225. Now I have to read to you a page.

"The essence of the theory of ideas lay in the conscious recognition of the fact that there is a class of entities for which the best name is probably universalists, that are entirely different from sensible things. Any use of language invokes the use of recognition, either conscious or unconscious, of the fact that there are such entities,

for every word used, except proper names, every abstract noun, every general noun, every verb, even every pronoun and every preposition, is the name for something of which there are or may be instances. The first step towards a conscious recognition of this class of entities was, if you believe Aristotle, taken by Socrates, when he concentrated on the search for definition, grasp for the meaning of a general word, what stems from the mere use of such a word, toward the recognition of such a word, toward the recognition of universals as a distinct class of entities. But Socrates seems to have been interested in the defining of one thing at a time, and we have seen the general significance of what he was doing. Plato did say that what was common to all searches for definitions was the assumption that there are such things as universals. He saw too that the objective difference between universals and particulars answers to the subjective difference between science and sense perception. Science deals with universals and sense perception deals with particulars. The senses present to us a word of particular events in which qualities are present almost inextricably conjoined and confused. If we were left to the senses alone, we should never be able to disentangle those qualities and reach a clear understanding of the structure of the word. But in reason, we have a faculty by which we can grasp universals in their pure form and to some extent see the relations that necessarily exist between these universals."

"The best example we have of this power is found in mathematics. Plato was the first thinker who clearly saw this. When we say that two and two make four, we are implying not that we have often experienced instances that this is so, and never found an instance to the contrary, but that we perceive the (inaudible) of the system of numbers that this must be so. What is true of two and two make four is true of the most advanced mathematical propositions. In mathematics Plato saw the clearest example, of the mind's power of perceiving the relation between universals, and that is why in the Republic it makes mathematics the necessary introduction to philosophy. But it was for him only the introduction. He envisaged the possibility of our similarly perceiving the necessary relation between other universals than those treated by mathematics, and in the Phaedo he gives us one and in the Sophistes another modest installment of such insight."

"In the main this is still an unfulfilled aspiration. But we owe it to Plato that we have the aspiration at all. He expressed sometimes the aspiration too sanguinely, as in the Republic he speaks of the whole nature of the system of ideas from a single unhypothetical first principle. [He means by that the idea of the good. That was mistaken, and so on . . .]

Strauss: Do you understand that? What is a universal? One of you give us an example. Or a particular, and then . . .

Student: A chair.

Strauss: Let us say a table, or chair, because then (inaudible). And a table is this particular thing. And Plato says, when we are

asked what is that -- a table, but we say this in n cases, in a way given of this thing and of many other things of this kind. And this shows that table not only means this table, but any table. It applies to all them. It is a universal. And these universals were in a way discovered by Socrates. Socrates made clear that men always speak in all times and places because there is language, and language consists to a considerable part of non-proper names, because when we say Tom Ingelman, this is this individual. There are 35 of the same name in big cities, and it would still not be a universal, but a proper name.

Now what does this mean? This is surely a great question, this universal. The famous controversy of the Middle Ages, the famous so-called controversy about universals. But what does this mean? After all, we are not logicians here. We are political scientists and it must mean something to us. Plato presents this doctrine in a political work, the Republic. I will first try to show why Sir David's view is, I think, ultimately impossible, namely for the following reason. If he were correct that Plato meant by ideas universals, then there would be ideas of everything for which we have a term, a word, which is not a proper name. So there would be a term that would be an eternal idea of the vice-president of the farm laborers. Naturally that is a proper name and is applied to n people who are vice-presidents of farm labor unions. Plato said that there are not only such universals; he said they are self-subsisting. Is it self-subsisting of the vice-presidency of the farm workers union? Why should it be? At the meat of it, isn't this an absolutely ridiculous duplication of what is. In a way that is what Aristotle means, but we have to go a bit further.

Now what did Plato have in mind when, according to the tradition, deviating from Socrates, he said the ideas are self-subsisting, and cannot possibly be sensible things. Now there are two kinds of phenomenon of which he certainly thought, and the first is mathematics, as Sir David says. For example, a circle of which the mathemtaician speaks, or a triangle, is never the circle drawn on the blackboard. The triangle drawn on the blackboard is not a triangle, but a very absurd complicated thing, and only because we say for our purposes that is a triangle and are not lines. So the mathemtiaal things as meant in mathematical discourse are radically different from all sensible things. We must use the mind's eye in order to see a triangle, circle, number 7 or whatever it may be.

But here there is a certain difficulty. In mathematics you can have, for example if you take a certain kind of triangle, you can have a large number of triangles with the same angles and the same sides. And this is somehow what in Plato's eyes speaks against the ultimate importance of mathematics. The mathematical object can be indefinitely multiplied. That you can go on with numbers, that's all right. You don't multiply by saying 4,913 because it is obviously a different number. But you can add up 4,913 and another 4,913. There are two of these idea things, and that is

something which Plato goes beyond.

Now where do you find some evidence for the view that they are self-subsisting? In a very old and respectable answer which is good enough as far as it goes, in the moral phenomenon. Say justice. We know of just men. We know of just laws. We know of just institutions. But a little bit (inaudible) which applies in all cases that no human being, no law, no institution, is perfectly just. If the term just is not to be wholly meaningless, there must be justice beyond every just phenomenon which we can see. So the -- in the light of which idea we can diagnose any human being, any law, any institution, and see to what extent it is just and to what extent it is not just.

Now this phenomenon seems to have been of theutmost importance for Socrates and Plato. But this does not yet surprise, at least in the first place because it does not answer the question, what is the relation between the mathematical object and the moral object. There are other things in the world apart from mathematical things and moral things. There are for example dogs and cats in the world.

Now what then is at the root of this doctrine of ideas? The simple root, and not this twofold mathematical things and ethical things, where we do not see the unity. Now the word most commonly used by Plato for ideas can be translated and is frequently translated as correctly the forms. The looks, the shapes, but also the kinds of things. And this is indeed the concern of Socrates, and perhaps in a modified manner -- we do not know enough to decide that -- of Plato.

Let me try to explain that. I begin from difficulties which we all experience today. Today, when we hear of social science, especially of scientific procedure, scientific statements and so on, it is always understood that the man in the street, say the voter for example, does not make his decision on the basis of scientific reason. There is such a thing as pre-scientific thought. But this distinction is absolutely indispensable and universally admitted.

Pre-scientific thought. For example, if I know in my poor way that there is a presidential election every four years, that is not scientific knowledge. I just found this by reading the newspapers and perhaps even the text of the U.S. Constitution. There is nothing scientific about this, and no social scientist, however sophisticated he may be, does not know this fact that there are presidential elections every four years in any way better than the simplest man in the street.

The question and controversy is this: is it not the ideal goal of science and in particular social science to get rid of all pre-scientific knowledge. In other words, people admit of course that we are bound, that we have to start always from pre-scientific knowledge, but some people have the notion that what social science

does is to transform this pre-scientific knowledge into scientific knowledge. Only by virtue of this transformation will we arrive at genuine knowledge, and knowledge will be something like folklore, an expression used by some advocates of this view.

Now I would like to make clear to you by a simple example why this is an absolutely fantastic goal. Let us assume that you are sociologists, to go out of our sacred precinct, and your professor would ask you to make some study about alcoholism or whatever sociologists are concerned with, and you should ask people about their opinion. And he will give you the most precise suggestion, but one thing he will not tell you -- how to tell a human being from a non-human being. He takes it for granted that you will know that, and if you do not know that, you would be wholly unfit to be a student of sociology.

Now how do you know how to tell a non-human being from a human being? Where do you learn it? In high school? No. In grammar school? No. You just grew up with it. You do not know the precise day when you used for the first time the word 'human being.' With some understanding, that you cannot call this a human being or a dog a human being. And if you tried to find out what do you mean by a human being, you get into great troubles and no lesser man than Plato proposed on one occasion at least, that what we mean by human being is nothing but non-feathered biped. Feathered bipeds we all know, but man is a philosopher, and this is not quite sufficient, as we all then see.

Now here we have a simple example, that all this pre-scientific knowledge is presupposed by social science, and this pre-scientific knowledge is not or never transformed into scientific knowledge in social science itself. Now this presupposition of all possible social science and this kind of presupposition is the theme of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle.

But to make this a bit more clear, let us consider not just modern social science, but the classical Greek alternative to Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian philosophy. And the best known alternative to that is atomism. Now what is the situation here? According to atomism, all things consist of atoms, of various sizes and shapes, and say to understand a cat, a dog, a lion, a lamb, we must know of which atoms and which kind of atoms he is composed, and if you know a compound consisting of so many atoms of this kind, then you would know that the formula -- I'm speaking now in modern language -- for the dog is this and the other one is the formula for the cat and so on. I believe you have no difficulty in following this point.

Now what is the Platonic-Socratic objection to this kind of procedure? Must I not know in advance what a cat, a lion, a lamb, is before I can trace them to their atomic composition?

Otherwise I might investigate the atomic composition of a being which is neither a man, nor a cat nor a lion. What kind of knowledge is that? Knowledge which we all have, and which we have by virtue of having grown up. An obvious and at the same time mysterious (inaudible). So Socrates and his followers ask for the 'what is' of each kind of thing.

And if we can state the simple argument against atomism or anything of this kind, it is to this effect. Atomism would reduce essential differences to differences of size or shape of atoms. Let me take an example from political science. There are people who try to present the issue between liberal democracy and its alternatives in the following manner. They say in both instances you find freedom, but on the other hand there is always coercion, even in liberal democracy. People are arrested here as well as in Soviet Russia. The ideal task would be to describe liberal democracy on the one hand and say communism on the other by saying the percentage or range of percentages of freedom and coercion, which makes a certain system democratic and another communist. Assuming that this could be done, it would reduce the essential difference to a quantitative difference. There is so much percentage of freedom in this system and a certain percentage of coercion in the one system. We see perhaps from this example that this is not really an academic question. It has to do with the crucial question with which all human beings are concerned, and that is the essential difference, or one could say the principles of importance.

Now the implication of this view, that there are essential differences, and essential differences are those things which count above everything else, this implies that the whole consists of kinds of beings, not of kinds of atoms-- there may be atoms, but this is not the question. To understand the whole is always above all to understand the kinds of things in their order. For example, you know that a (inaudible) is lower than an animal, and a dumb animal is lower than man.

Philosophy is here not so much cosmogonic, an explanation of how the whole cosmos came into being, not out of atoms from the void, but cosmologically. To present the logos of the cosmos. The finished, completed cosmos. You can easily see how very important for this whole approach was the emergence of evolution. If one would translate Darwin's Origin of the Species into Greek, its most reasonable translation, although not the most literal one, would be "The Coming into Being of These Forms." Then you see where, according to Plato, the ideas cannot come into being and cannot perish. But the question nevertheless, in spite of the tremendous importance which evolution has for the whole human view, at least in the case of man, and what is the essential difference between man and the other beings, is as urgent as it always has been. And this question cannot be disposed of by any

discoveries of evermore intermediate forms between some non-men and men, because at a certain moment the quantitative difference turns into the qualitative difference because now you have a being which can speak, which can coherently talk.

Now when people talk today about the human condition, which has taken the place of human nature, then of course this presupposes the nature of man, because the human condition is exactly the condition of a being which has the nature of man.

Now as for the difference between Plato and Aristotle, Plato says that these ideas of dogs, cats, justice and so on, are self-subsisting, or as he says in poetic language, are self-subsisting in a super heavenly place. The gods are in heaven, but beyond heaven are still more remote and more grand places. And there the ideas there dwell. Here the sensible things, dogs, cats, are only by virtue of these ideas dwelling in the super-heavenly place.

Now to repeat what I said before, the evidence which Plato has you can see for yourself by speaking of the example for justice. Plato asserts, and that is implied in the doctrine of ideas, no human being, no law, no institution, can be unqualifiably just. Because it is a particular thing. Aristotle is not so demanding, and Aristotle is perfectly satisfied that there are many people who are perfectly just, not too many but quite a few, and just institutions can be just.

I will state the difference between Plato and Aristotle as follows. From an Aristotelian point of view. Plato is compelled to say the true dog, the dog in itself, the dog dwelling in that superheavenly place, does not run around, does not eat food, does not generate dogs, but is wholly unchangeable and Aristotle said that's nonsense. The true dog is of course a dog which runs around and barks and does all the other things which dogs do. Here and in many other cases, we have common sense itself against less common sense. But would Plato be deduced to silence by this powerful argument? No. A true dog, what does it mean? When a fellow says bring me a dog, and the fellow brings him a puppy, then he would say, did I tell you to bring a puppy? No. You should bring a dog. Or if he brings a very sick old dog about to expire, he would say is this a dog? That's a sick dog. So the dog without qualifications, like too young to be a dog, or too old to be a dog, is the true dog. And that is a being which can by itself live like a dog and do the doggish things.

But here Plato comes in and says that the doggish thing of the utmost importance is the generation of new dogs. Now if you look at this here dog, he will always be invariably a male or female dog, and neither of which is competent to generate by itself another dog. And therefore, if you want to see the true dog, the perfect dog, you will not find him in any individual. Now apply this to the human race.

Let us assume that men like Socrates are the most perfect human beings, of wonderful character, generating children, and bore his antiquity with all dignity and propriety, and all the other qualities of Socrates. But is he a perfect human being? Would Socrates be possible if there were not people who were paving roads, building temples, and making shoes. So how is a human being self-sufficient. In other words, and a great jump now, the whole human race, the whole humankind, the whole human species, is the perfect man, and here there is a kind of -- one can understand here why the 'idea' or 'form' means at the same time, literally translated, species. That is Plato's point. Now this complete thing, sufficient for all purposes of the species, you will not find in any individual. And you have to go beyond it, either to the idea of dog or the whole species, but you cannot go to the whole species if you do not know what it takes to be a member of the whole species. And that means something beyond every individual, comprising all of them.

So this much about the background of these great troubles between Plato and Aristotle, which shows on various levels in Aristotle's criticism of Plato, not only in the theoretical work but also in the political work. The critique of Plato's Republic and Laws in the second book of the Politics and here the critique of Plato's doctrine of the idea of the good in our Nicomachean Ethics. And we will turn to that next time.

Lecture V
Aristotle's Ethics, February 22, 1968

(Please note that Lecture V was not completely recorded. As a result, we are only able to reproduce here approximately 15 minutes of the total lecture.)

Reader: "On the other hand, a limit has to be assumed in these relationships. For if the list be extended to one's ancestors and descendants and to the friends of one's friends, it could go on ad infinitum. But this is a point which must be considered later on. We take a self-sufficient thing to mean a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing. Such a thing we deem happiness to be. Moreover, we think happiness the most desirable of all good things without being itself reckoned as one among the rest. For if it were so reckoned, it is clear that we should consider it more desirable than if even the smallest of other good things were combined with it, since this addition would result in a larger total of goods and of two goods, the greater is always the more desirable."

Strauss: Let us stop here. We see here this brief discussion on how far you extend that. I mean it is clear that if you are happy for yourself and your nearest and dearest are very miserable, your happiness will not be complete. But how far do you extend your nearest and dearest? Must cousins also come in like brothers and sisters? And is cousins also cousins of the second degree? And where do you stop? No universal answer is possible. It is a simple illustration of the inexactness, of the lack of exactness, in moral matters. In some cases, in a closely linked family, the cousins even count as much as brothers and sisters and in other cases even brothers and sisters are not important for asserting one's own happiness.

There is a question which Aristotle raises here by implication. Will happiness be increased by intelligence, virtue, or does happiness necessarily include intelligence and virtue. Aristotle's general answer as we shall see soon is the latter. So there cannot be happiness here and virtue there, but the virtuous is as it were the core of happiness. Now it is this question which he tries to answer and it is his final answer of the question of what happiness is and this comes in the next passage and we might perhaps read the beginning.

Reader: "Happiness, therefore, being found to be something primal and self-sufficient, is the end in which all actions attain."

Strauss: The practicable goods would be perhaps more precise.

Reader: "To say however that the supreme good is happiness, would be a truism. We still require a more explicit account of what constitutes happiness. Perhaps then we may arrive at

this by ascertaining what is man's function."

Strauss: Let us say work, because the word 'function' is so grossly misused and let us use what Aristotle uses in Greek the work of man.

Reader: "For the goodness or efficiency of a flute player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort and in general of anybody who has some work or business to perform is thought to reside in that function"

Strauss: Work.

Reader: ". . . and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the work of man."

Strauss: So Aristotle tries now to reach a solution of what happiness is. Happiness is a good state of man, and not only a good state, but the best state of man. And now Aristotle raises here the question, where is goodness located? And he takes first the example of the arts or artisans. For example, a carpenter -- how do we distinguish a good carpenter from a bad or indifferent carpenter? By looking at the tables which the two carpenters produce. At the work. Now let us try this with man. Is there not also a specific work of man as man by which we can distinguish between the good man and the bad man? Therefore, they translate it by function. The Greek word 'work' and I believe also the English word 'work' leaves it open --namely, that work is something outside, self-subsisting after it has been completed like the table or the shoe. Work is action. Therefore Aristotle asks, is there a specific work of man as man, a specific work of man. If so, then human goodness, and in particular the highest form of goodness, will consist in a specific work, and if you do not like the word work, say activity. But the Greek word comprises both, work in the sense of the shoe, and that Aristotle tries to find now in the sequel the answer to this question. But the general answer, is this, that man's specific work, specific activity, is rationality, and therefore the goodness of man will consist in the goodness of his rationality, i.e., if he uses his reason for destroying his reason, say like becoming alcoholic, then he is a bad man. But if he cultivates it and makes the most of it and the best of it, then he is a good man. And there are certain minor but important distinctions but these are distinctions into which I do not have to go now.

And so the answer which Aristotle arrives at in a few more steps which we will consider next time is this: happiness consists in virtuous or excellent activity, but a specifically human activity. A man may be an excellent tightrope dancer but this does not make him an excellent man, because tightrope dancing is not the activity characteristic of man. Maybe only men can tightrope dance-- I have no opinion on this matter, but it is surely not the activity characteristic of them. To be an excellent man means to be able to do the work of man in reasoning,

and if this is so, we already include that the excellent man must have some means, because he means (inaudible) of his good intentions. For example, if he were completely paralyzed, and could not even speak, then he cannot do the works of man. He is an unfortunate man and and is an object of compassion, but he cannot be an excellent man. We know not how he would act if he were not paralyzed, and also if it is true that there are certain activities which require a modicum of wealth, as was the case prior to the age of affluence, then there will be quite a few human beings who will be unable to do the work of man who lack the needs of support. It is unfortunate, but nevertheless Aristotle implies that it cannot be changed.

The main point is this -- by speaking of virtuous activity, Aristotle includes the external conditions of happiness in his definition of happiness, and therefore he disposed of a difficulty with which he had confronted us shortly before.

And at the end of this section, which we just began, there is again a discussion of what I call method, meaning what is the degree of exactness to be expected in such moral matters. There are altogether three discussions and we will come to that next time.

Now we stop here. Are there any questions?

Student: When Aristotle says that the truth is to be preferred to one's friends, does this imply that it applies only to those who discuss ethics, or does it also to general (inaudible)?

Strauss: As Aristotle means it here, it does not apply to non-philosophers. If he means it understood in a different sense, for example, must a friend be a witness before a court and say the truth rather than save his friend, that I suppose he would say in this case unless it is a terribly tyrannical regime, he would have to say the truth because he is under oath after all. But as he means it here, the question arises only for philosophers.

Student: And in that sense again there is a difference between the man who addresses the audience and the audience itself, because certainly the audience itself is more inclined to prefer their friends to the truth. As a general rule.

Strauss: Yes, you could almost say that it is the definition of the non-philosopher. Now any other points?

Another Student: Could I ask you a question about what you said last time?

Strauss: Yes, yes, either that or it would be a (inaudible) democratic procedure and only those subjects pertaining to today would be discussed.

Student: I don't quite understand what you said about Plato's view of mathematical objects. You said that they were ultimately not ideas.

Strauss: Well, not ideas, but they are . . . because . . . the ideas of the dog or of justice -- there is one and only one idea. One idea of justice and one idea of a dog and one idea of man. But if you take five, there are many five's. I can easily prove it to you. 5 plus 5. The first 5 is not the second 5. You can invert the order, but still there are two 5's. You cannot make additions of ideas, but you can and you must make additions of numbers, or for that matter, also of magnitudes of course. You can add triangles to triangles and circles to circles.

Student: But couldn't you say that each of those five's or each of those triangles are individual five's.

Strauss: You would only have to say that there is an idea of the triangle or an idea of five higher than the five's which occur in operation. They exist in Plato's teaching, called idea numbers. And some people understood ideal numbers to be this idea of five in contradistinction to the five's or straight lines and so on. I do not think that they are right. Aristotle's testimony is quite clear, that Plato did not admit any ideas of numbers. The ideas are intellectual, but sensible. Do you get the idea? (Inaudible) says the numbers or other mathematical things are not sensible, intellectual, because you can never see a straight line, and you can never draw a straight line. The line of which the geometer talks is not the line which you see at the table or which you draw at the table.

And the same is true of ideas. All justice we find in the world in men or in actions and in institutions is imperfect, imperfect as the straight line drawn on the blackboard, and they point to something which can no longer be seen with the bodily eye but only with the eyes of the mind, and these are the noetic things, and the noetic things consist in these two branches, mathematical things and ideas. And I think the simplest sign of the difference between the ideas and the mathematical things is the multiplicity of the noetic things in mathematics. In the case of dogs, (inaudible . . .), one idea, but the multiplicity of dogs is the multiplicity of dogs we see, of sensible dogs, sensible not in the sense of house-broken, but sensible in the sense of being visible to the eye.

Lecture VI
Aristotle's Ethics, February 28, 1968

Aristotle starts from the premise that the highest and complete good, both highest and complete, is happiness, as appears from what he says about the subject that there was universal agreement as to the soundness of the starting point, only that there was great disagreement as to the meaning of happiness. But that happiness should be the starting point, that was universally admitted. Now this starting point, this notion, is still intelligible. I mention only one example -- the Declaration of Independence -- the right to the pursuit of happiness.

But nevertheless the word 'happiness' as we use it now does not have the fullness which the Greek word *eudaimōs* has, and the Greek word we can say safely stands in meaning between happiness and blessed, and sometimes it is wiser to think of bliss than of happiness, when reading the remarks of Aristotle.

Aristotle starts then from the fact that all men and therefore also in particular also the good men strive for happiness. His concern with happiness is in a way prior to his concern with virtue. Virtue proves to be the core of happiness. But the first step is happiness.

Now in modern times this starting point has become questionable. I mentioned last time Hobbes, and I remind you of the main point. Hobbes denied that there is a highest good. The felicity in this life, what Aristotle meant by happiness, consists not in the repose of the mind satisfied. Felicity, as old moral philosophers understood it, is the condition at which man's desires are at an end because man has reached the highest. And Hobbes says that such a condition is impossible. Therefore, the felicity of which we can dream is a continual progress of the desire, and the final conclusion is that human life is characterized by a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceases only in death.

Now of course the question is whether Aristotle understood by happiness the condition in which man's desires are at an end. Does he have in mind food, drink, etc. and therefore have desires for food, drink, and sleep, so Aristotle surely does not mean that a happy man's desires are at an end in the way in which Hobbes understood them. But one could say the happy man needs to think of replenishment, but this is not meant as a progress. He doesn't want to have ever more food, ever more drink, or ever better food or ever better drink, and furthermore if felicity is in an Aristotelian sense -- does it consist in the repose of a mind satisfied? Well, a mind satisfied, yes. But repose is somewhat misleading. Because happiness as Aristotle understands it consists in activity. Now we shall see that soon.

Much more important was the notion of the criticism of happiness by Kant. According to Kant, happiness is the sum of satisfaction

of all our inclinations, and therefore happiness is an undetermined concept, with relations differing from individual to individual and within the individual from time to time. It is in other words an ideal of the imagination, not of reason. Therefore it cannot be the principle of morality. The principle of morality according to Kant is duty or respect for the moral law. The principle of morality as Kant understands it is taken from the nature of man, whereas happiness is the human goal. Because the principle of morality must apply to beings even higher than man, especially to God, because if we have different moral standards as it were for God than for man, then moral chaos would follow.

Secondly, if the moral standard is taken from man's nature, man's goodness, man's moral possibilities, might be limited by his nature. This is a thought with which I'm sure you are all familiar in application, for example, if you (inaudible) the rights of the fairer sex on the grounds that there are natural differences, are so important that man should have a higher status than woman. And then the question arises, what do you know about the possibilities of the female sex since the female sex has never been given a fair chance to rise to its highest possibilities. According to Kant, what is morally demanding does not require a proof of possibilities. We do not have to go into the question of what are the differences between men and women for example morally are. For Kant this follows from his moral principle which implies what we are morally obliged to do and what we can do. Thou can because thou ought. And therefore there is no need of the proof of the possibility of what is morally demanded. So happiness loses its central status in moral philosophy through Kant.

Nevertheless, the tradition which put morality at the basis of moral virtue continued -- I referred to the right of happiness and the pursuit of happiness in the Declaration of Independence. I remember in passing that this notion of the right to the pursuit of happiness is not as one student of the Declaration of Independence said, is not a product of the frontier, of the frontier mentality. (inaudible), a Frenchman, mentioned that in the French declaration of the rights of man, the right to the pursuit of happiness is not mentioned because the French are much too sophisticated or cynical to believe in such a thing, but the young American nation (inaudible) frontier -- that's sheer nonsense of course.

The right to the pursuit of happiness to the best of my knowledge was stated for the first time by a German philosopher of the 18th century, Christian Voll, in his natural right. And what he understood by the right of happiness is indicated by these two examples -- that man has no natural right to vindicate the glory of God, so in other words if a man has committed a blaspheme, a man does not have a natural right to kill the blasphemmer, but on the other hand man has a natural right to cosmetics, to

adorn this body. In brief, the notion of the right of happiness emerges originally rather in a continental rococo context than in the context of the American frontier.

Afterward, the notion of happiness played a central role in utilitarianism, the happiness of the greatest number. And this leads me to a rather delayed stage in the tradition of happiness and that is Nietzsche. Nietzsche said occasionally or had someone say occasionally 'I do not strive for happiness, but for my work', and in the movements which are now at present quite powerful, this critique of happiness is taken for granted or not even mentioned anymore. It is understood that happiness is not the ultimate end of man. I would like to illustrate Nietzsche's critique of happiness by a remark occurring near the beginning of his (inaudible). Now (inaudible) had addressed the multitude and had spoken to them of the overman or superman. There was no reaction, no understanding; they laughed about it. And then he said let me address their pride, and let me speak to them of what is most contemptible, (inaudible). "The time has come for man to set himself a goal; the time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is still rich enough but one day this soil will be poor and domesticated and no tall trees will be able to grow in it. Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to work. I say unto you, one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say unto you you still have chaos in yourself. Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the last man. What is love? What is creation? What is longing? Thus asks the last man, and he blinks. The earth has become small and on it hops the last man who makes everything small. His grace is as ineradicable as a flea beetle. The last man lives longest. We have invented happiness, said the last man and they blink. They have left the regions where it was hard to live for one needs warmth. One still needs one's neighbor and rubs against him for one needs warmth. Becoming sick and harbouring suspicion are sinful to them. One proceeds carefully. The fool whoever still stumbles over stones or human beings, a little poison now and then, that makes for agreeable (inaudible), and much poison in the end an agreeable death. But still work, for work is a form of entertainment but one is careful if the entertainment be too harrowing. One no longer becomes poor or rich. Both require too much exertion. Who still wants to move, who obey? They require too much exertion. No shepherd and no herd. Everybody wants the same. Everybody is the same. Whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse. Formerly all the world was mad -- say the most refined, and . . . "

(The tape was changed at this point.)

"One still quarrels, but one is reconciled, else it might spoil the digestion. One has one simple pleasure for the day and one

simple pleasure for the night, but one has a regard for help. We have invented happiness, last men, and they blink."

So here happiness appears as the idea of the last and the most despicable men, and at the other pole there is something which Nietzsche calls creativity, creation, and in its highest form this overman, the superman.

I have been asked today before class by one of you what is underlying Nietzsche's notion of the overman and the superman. Is this not just a crazy notion. Well, for Nietzsche the situation of man is this. Up to his time or shortly before, say by the French Revolution, men were always guided by the notion of something superhuman, something to which man as man had to look up. This superhuman was called in the most powerful tradition God. Now that is a premise of the book by Sartre, "God is dead." The consequence is that man has no longer something to look up to, and therefore the last man. It is a complete decay of human greatness, of the possibility of human greatness. Therefore, man himself must strive to become superhuman. That is the meaning of the superman. Man must take the place of God not by simply denying this superhuman, but by overcoming man himself, by becoming in a way divinely.

What are your difficulties, Mr. ____?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, well, Nietzsche did not mean that there should be a new species which could not breed with the human species. But he meant beings in the most important sense superior to human beings hitherto. There is a formula in another writing of Nietzsche where the overman or the superman is Caesar with the soul of Christ. In other words, a coming together of the two great Western traditions, the biblical and the classical (Greco-Roman), on the highest level, but in a form which this synthesis of Jerusalem and Athens had never taken before. And such a demand is rooted in the view that there is -- anything short of that, any traditional idea, is discredited by the discrediting of the belief in superhuman beings, in the old-fashioned sense of the word. Higher than beings who are not man, but are higher than man.

So after having reminded ourselves of the fact that the notion of happiness lacks today the self-evident which it had for Aristotle and for many many thinkers after Aristotle, we turn to our discussion of happiness in Aristotle, in first book. 1097b, 28. That is a passage where Aristotle tries to give a precise determination of what happiness is by looking at the work of man. Aristotle turns to the work of man on the ground that in the case of man as man as well as that of the various artisans, the good of which we are speaking, the highest good, is found in the work, but is there a work of man as man, a specific work of man -- that is the question.

Reader: "To say however that the supreme good is happiness will probably appear a truism. We still require a more specific account of what constitutes happiness. Perhaps we may arrive at this by ascertaining what is man's work, for a the goodness or efficiency of a flute player or sculptor or craftsman and in general of anybody who has some work or business to perform is thought to reside in that work, and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the work of man."

Strauss: So that is still a question, is there happiness?

Reader: "Are we then to suppose that while the carpenter and shoemaker have definite businesses or work belonging to them, man as such has none and is not designed by nature to fulfill any function."

Strauss: Or stated more simply, but is by nature worthless. Why could there not be a man by nature lazy? What does Aristotle think of that? After all, there are also many human beings that are lazy. Maybe they are according to nature beachcombers or what have you. Now what does Aristotle mean? He is sure that man is not by nature a lazy being. By nature means here if man is in good order or at least not disgraced. And now he gives a closer view in the immediate sequel.

Reader: "Must we not rather assume that just as the eye and the foot and each of the various members of the body manifestly has a certain work of its own, so a human being also has a certain work, over and above all the functions of his particular members."

Strauss: He uses the example of the various parts of man, of the human body. First he had used the example of the various arts -- for the following reason. Of the various arts one could say they are of merely human origin. Man devised the arts of shoemaking and carpentry and so on. And therefore they would not throw any light on nature. But when we look at the parts of the body, the natural parts, the eye, of seeing, the hand, of grasping, and so on and so on, then if all parts of man, of the human body in the first place, do reveal, do show themselves to have a work, it is plausible to assume that man as a whole has such a work. That is the argument.

This passage you might compare if you have the time to a section in the first book of Plato's Republic, 352d - 353e.

Reader: "What then precisely can this work be? The mere act of living appears to be shared even by plants, whereas we are looking for the work peculiar to man. We must therefore set aside the vital activity of nutrition and growth."

Strauss: They are not specifically human, and therefore we cannot find in them the specifically human work and therefore not the specifically human goodness of work, and that specifically human goodness of work is the specifically human virtue.

Reader: "Next in the scale will come some form of (inaudible), but this too appears to be shared by horses and animals in general. There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the rational part of man. This part has two divisions: one, rational as obedience to principles; the other, as possessing principles and exercising intelligence. Rational life again has two meanings. Let us assume that we are here concerned with the active exercise of the rational faculty since this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. If then the work of man is the active exercise of the soul's faculties, in conformity with rational principles, or at all events not in disassociation with rational principles, and if we acknowledge the work of an individual and of a good individual of the same class, for instance, a harper and a good harper, and so generally with all classes, are generically the same. The qualification of the latter's superiority in excellence being added to the function in each case -- I mean that if the work of the harper is to play the harp, that of a good harper is to play the harp well, and if this is so, and if we declare that the work of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities, in association with rational principles and say that the functions of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well-performed when it is performed within its own proper excellence, from these premises it follows that the good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and the most perfect among them."

Strauss: Now let us stop here for a moment. The specific work of man must be the actuality, what he translates as the actual exercise of rational activity. The word used by Aristotle is logos, which he translates as the actual exercise of rational activity, or by principle -- not the best translation. Reason would be better. More literal it would be speech or discourse, but this course also presupposed thinking, reason.

There is one remark which is at first glance perhaps not intelligible. That is when he says the work of this being and of this excellent being belong to the same genus. For example, the carpenter -- there are different carpenters, the good carpenter. Their works belong to the same genus, and therefore by knowing the one, we know in principle the other. Therefore, there is no vicious transition from fact to value. If you know what the work of a carpenter is, to make chairs, tables and so on, then you know what the work of a good carpenter is, namely to make good chairs, good tables, or whatever. The same would apply to man -- if I know what the specific work of man is, namely use of reason, then I know that the good man would be a man who would reason well because all human activity, however low and degraded and disgusting, implies the use of reason. Man cannot help it, but he may use it ill or may use it indifferently.

This remark about the good and the indifferent belonging to the same genus is underlying a passage in Plato's Republic which is best understood in the light of the Aristotelian passage we read. The passage is in the fourth book, 433.

Socrates says: "What we laid down in the beginning as the universal requirement when we are founding our city, this I think or some kind of this (one could also say some genus of this) is justice, for what we did lay down was that each man must perform one service to the state for which his nature was best adopted." In other words, we laid down that everyone should do his job -- that's justice. Justice is doing one's job or minding one's business, as one may also translate the Greek expression.

But Socrates makes this crucial qualification -- "this or some kind of this" -- the kind which he has in mind is of course to do one's job well, and justice means to do one's job well. Merely to do one's job indifferently, sloppily, or badly, that is not justice. This is the same thing which Aristotle has in mind here.

I made a slight mistake which I will now correct -- or some kind of this -- the genus comprises both doing well and doing, and the genus contains the various kinds, one kind doing well, the other kind doing non-well. Ill or indifferently.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: No, here it is implied that it is good.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The quality which does not yet imply goodness, behaving towards fear, -- men must always behave toward fear because fear arises all the time from various directions. And he can behave towards fear rightly, according to reason, or wrongly, not according to reason. So behaving towards fear is the genus consisting of the two species, one behaving correctly and the other not behaving correctly. And courage would be the correct way.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is a simple ambiguity of the word reason. Reasonably may mean and what we ordinarily mean by it is to use one's reason properly. But even if we do not use our reason properly, we act in another sense of the word reasonably, reasonably, because we are rational beings and we cannot help using our reason, even if we misuse it. We have as it were the choice between using or misusing our reason. We do not have the choice of acting purely instinctively, except in the lower parts of our beings for which we have no responsibility.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, Aristotle is here speaking of average guys.

Student: Yes I know, but does that mean that there is no essential difference between a philosopher and a . . .

Strauss: We do not know of that in this stage of the argument.

Student: But we know that there are some men who reason well and some who misuse reason.

Strauss: But here reasoning well -- Aristotle thinks in the first place of using reason regarding conduct, for example, regarding fears, regarding desires, and regarding money, and what have you. You must not anticipate these things . . .

Student: Are we to suppose that these classifications might not be valid generally . . .

Strauss: That is the point. They would have to be refined probably when we rise to a higher level. They do not simply disappear. In other words, if you have on the simple moral level the extreme possibilities of the gentleman and the crook, the fact that the philosopher is not a gentleman, doesn't mean that he is a crook. Although he might in some respects deviate from a gentleman in a way in which a crook would better understand than a gentleman. But for different reasons.

Student: Well, then is there an essential relationship between gentlemen and crooks? Are gentlemen in any way essentially different from crooks?

Strauss: Yes, most definitely; otherwise the moral distinctions wouldn't make sense.

Student: They might to both men, even though one is a bad man. It just doesn't seem obvious to me that on the face of it there's an essential difference between a man who is a murderer and a man who is not a murderer.

Strauss: That is something more specific, because a man might be a murderer or at least a killer without being a crook. For example, . . . so let us not take too narrow a notion. And since I spoke of crook, let us remain on the same level of expression and speak of squares. We imply that there is an essential difference between squares and crooks. Now that this distinction is ordinarily used not very thoughtfully and not very precisely -- in other words, we do not look very much into the heart of the two kinds of people, where we might discover in the heart of the crook something (inaudible) and in the heart of the square a heart of stone. That might happen, but we cannot do this all the time, and when you think especially about the questions with which we are confronted in legal matters, where rather crude

decisions must be made without indefinite appeals which would ruin (inaudible); therefore these crude distinctions are meaningful and necessary. That is the point which Aristotle takes for granted. And the inexactness which goes with it, of which he has spoken, we have to accept that. Otherwise, we cannot live.

Student: In searching for this peculiar characteristic of man, Aristotle uses as the starting points the cases of animals and plants (inaudible) universal function with man. However, he seems to automatically dismiss the possibility that these plants and animals possibly have their own peculiar activities. I mean he just assumes that man has a peculiar activity.

Strauss: But the others also. An oak is radically different from a birch or what have you. This he does not deny. He only says that the specifically human cannot possibly lie in what he shares with the plants and specifically human cannot possibly lie in what he shares with the brutes. He is not a plant and he is not a brute. He is the only animal who possesses speech and reason.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Did you ever see plants speak to each other? Did you ever see dogs speak to each other? You could say this only in a metaphoric way. Dogs seem to communicate somewhat; ducks seem to communicate something to each other, but not speakingly, and however one may admire some of the animals, say dogs, one can not seriously maintain that they are strictly speaking intelligent beings. The popular phrase 'dumb animals' or 'dumb friends' testifies to the truth of what Aristotle says.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, I mean look at the true stories ever told of men or animals or brutes or plants. Where do you find philosophy or science or religion among brutes? Some people say that elephants are pious, but I believe that was a sentimental assertion by a man who loved elephants.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: All right, there is an analogon of reason to some extent you can say there. But an analogon reason is not reason strictly speaking.

Student: We know that the carpenter can make a chair, and that the good carpenter can make a good chair, and the harper plays and the good harper plays well, and the work of man is virtue . . .

Strauss: No, not virtue, the work of man is acting according to reason.

Student: And the best work of man is acting toward the highest reason. Now by what virtue, by what means, does he think that we can know what the best care is, what good harping is, what good

thinking is. Now how does he judge among these things?

Strauss: Did you never in your life see a blunderer in carpentry? Who produced a chair on which you could not sit without falling down, or a table which was bound to collapse if you put any weight on it. So you can see not a great experience of life is needed and great intelligence in order to distinguish sufficiently for practical purposes between a good carpenter and a poor carpenter. The same applies to the other arts as well. A physician is a little different, because bedside manners could deceive us about the quality of the physician, but still in the long run you can say if all people whose necks were straightened and who had never had straight necks, you would say I wouldn't go to him.

Student: On a practical level.

Strauss: And do we not distinguish between men who act reasonably or sensibly and those who do not act reasonably or sensibly? Whose judgment we have found invariably sound as against those whose judgment we have found invariably unsound? And if there is no universally valid (inaudible) by which you can measure sensibilities and temperaments, that has to do with the quality of moral matters. Imprecision. But still there is not complete chaos there.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But we make distinctions, and we know for example that a man may be excellent in an office as the (inaudible) and another man may act excellently as the President of the United States. You know this difference, and also the difficulty of judging in the case of the President, it is much easier to reach agreement about the officer in a social security administration. That is so. So there is a lower level where agreement is easily reached, as regarding carpentry or shoemaking, and when the things become more demanding, then it becomes more difficult to judge. In other words, there is no substitute ultimately for judgment. But judgment in certain dimensions is relatively easy. You can conceivably be replaced by mechanical devices. And in other spheres which are more important where it can never be replaced by mechanical devices.

Another student: Well, when a carpenter is a bad carpenter but is nevertheless a carpenter, and a harpist is a bad harpist but is nevertheless a harpist, now what will Aristotle do with men who are not capable of reason?

Strauss: Do you mean morals?

Student: No. Well, yes.

Strauss: Well, what shall we do? I mean they would not listen and would not read this book and they are generally out of circulation. They have no influence on human affairs; they are a great burden, to the other members of their families.

Student: But are they men? How does Aristotle define man?

Strauss: They are radically by nature defective human beings so that they cannot even acquire virtue. That is also a fact which we have to acknowledge.

Student: Natural slaves?

Strauss: No, natural slaves are only very dumb. Aristotle understands by natural slaves a man who has some reason because otherwise he couldn't listen to the commands of his master, but I mean he can listen to more specific commands . . . but he cannot take care of himself. For example, my example is a fellow to whom you have to say you should now bring five tree trunks here -- five -- one, two, three, four, five.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle would then say that this is not a case for instruction, but rather for correction, by non-instructional means, or else a course in pure theoretical philosophy, of which he would be shown that the conclusion from the variety of customs to the non-unity of morality is not valid. Because for example people have different usages regarding a great variety of things, and it does not follow that all the various customs are of equal value. I could not be a single one or two or three or four of these cultures that have the true morality without deviating from it to various degrees. That was the way in which people looked at such matters in former times. But the variety of customs was always known. And men drew different conclusions from it in former times. Well, Aristotle you can say starts from what he sees around himself, that is of course primarily Greek things, that is undeniable, but he did not view Greek morality as a privilege; he would only say that the Greeks were particularly fortunate people. The climate was the right mean between too hot and too cold, say like central California, or maybe in southern California, and the Greeks had two things which he did not find anywhere else, (inaudible) people living incities, and yet being politically free. Babylon was also a city, but they were subject to despotic rulers, and the same was true for Persia, and the northern fellows in northern Greece, they had political freedom in their way, but they were not citified, and that meant the same originally as civilized, and therefore this would have been his argument. The Greeks with all their great defects, which he saw very well, partly through meld, partly through good luck, were in a better position to speak about these matters than other people. But he wouldn't deny that non-Greeks couldn't learn that. That would be a justification for the fact that he said on the whole what the Greek wise men say is taken more seriously by him than wise men of other tribes.

Student: I was wondering if there was perhaps more than simply one specific difference between man and other animals or plants for example -- perhaps his ability to produce representations of

what he sees might be considered unique to man.

Strauss: The question would be whether that does not imply or is not based upon discourse. That's the question.

Student: Well, that answers the question.

Strauss: Analysis, well, imitation as he calls it -- whether imitation, in which the arts imitate, does not presuppose reason. Just as laughing is a peculiarity of man. Now why did Aristotle not call man the laughing animal? And instead of the rational animal? But he would say that laughing and weeping are extreme things and presuppose a latitude of feelings which is possible only on the ground of rationality. You can understand laughing on the ground of rationality, but you cannot understand rationality on the ground of laughing. Or to take another example, man is the animal which possesses hands, two hands and two feet as distinguished from four feet. Let us forget about the birds. And Aristotle is confronted by this question -- is man to be defined as a being with hands or as a being characterized by reason. He would say I can understand hands as essentially belonging to a rational being and not the other way around. Otherwise it would be a complicated and unnecessarily complicated attempt to make things intelligible.

Student: So if someone were to say, as I believe some people have, that man's talent for speech would result in his imitative ability, . . .

Strauss: Well, linked up with it. Linked up with it.

Student: But if he were to say that speech was resting on imitation rather than vice versa.

Strauss: Aristotle would say that it is the other way around. If he were not a speaking animal, he could not make this distinction between the image and the imaged on which all imitation is based.

Student: But that seems to me requires a more detailed . . .

Strauss: Oh, sure. There is no question. But Aristotle here can at any rate say he appears to think things generally granted, i.e., not universally granted, and we all understand them from our ordinary life. And that is sufficient at least at the beginning.

So Aristotle asserts then that there is a specific work of man, and that is action with reason or according to reason, and therefore since there is a specific work of man, there is a specific good work of man. The good work is to use one's reason well, in the various forms in which reason can be used. Aristotle alludes to these differences by saying that there may be more than one kind of human goodness and then the highest kind would be

then the ultimately authoritative. What that highest kind would be he doesn't say here, but as we know from the end of this work, it is theoretical knowledge of philosophy.

Now let us go on.

Reader: "Moreover, this activity must occupy a complete lifetime, for one swallow does not make a spring, but one fine day. Similarly, one day or a brief period of happiness does not make a man supremely blessed and happy."

Strauss: So a man whodoes the specific work of man well in a life of some length, let us say in a completed life, is happiness. In other words, a child, which has not been able to acquire this (inaudible) or young men or women dying prematurely, let us say, cannot have what we properly call blessed or happy. Some maturity is required. And only in this way can an individual show that he possesses human excellence.

Reader: "Let this account then serve to describe the good in outline, for no doubt the proper procedure is to begin by making a rough sketch and to fill it in afterwards. If a work has been well laid down in outline, to carry it on and complete it in detail may be supposed to be within the capacity of anybody, and in this working out of detail time seems to be a good inventor or at all events assistant. This is indeed how advances in the arts have actually come about; hence anyone can fill in the gaps."

Strauss: So you see Aristotle says here now explicitly that what he has given us is only a sketch, an outline, and to fill it out, anybody is good enough, whether . . . which is of course a great compliment to us, which we probably do not deserve.

But the sketch he nevertheless says is most important. He says later on that the beginning is the half of the whole. The remark about time, time is good (inaudible . . .). There is in the fourth book of his Physics where he discusses time thematically. Time is presented rather as bad, as a cause of forgetting and decay, but what Aristotle in a way his conclusions were drawn from this remark of time. But everything depends on how time is used. If you use it well, it will be helpful to you. If you do not use it, it will bring about decay and degeneration.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle doesn't say that, but Aristotle seems to say that, in his analysis of time in the Physics, and therefore makes this remark that our passage shows that Aristotle does not regard time as bad or as the cause of bad.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I mean every dog grows and decays, and all happens like that all the time. It doesn't affect the species, because the eternity of the species means the non-eternity of the individuals. And non-eternity means mortality.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This does not follow, but as mortal as dog.

Another Student: But I mean if we judge somehow by the eternity of things and by the species . . . whether men die or don't die, doesn't affect that, does that mean that men are somehow unimportant?

Strauss: In the light of what? Every human being I suppose has other human beings to whom he is attached, and their death will be very sad for him. But if some old man especially or even a young man for that matter, and the end of the world dies, it would be hypocrisy to shed tears about his death. You can't really be sad about that. If some man wholly unknown to you dies, . . . I do not know what you mean.

Student: I just wanted to know whether individuals are significant in any way.

Strauss: In what sense significant? I mean you are yourself and you are significant to yourself I suppose. And to your friends. But not all human beings can be significant human beings. Or can they?

Student: I would imagine that from the standpoint of Christian thought they could be easily.

Strauss: But is the word usually translated by neighbor, is this not an accident? In other words, can a man actively love someone of whom he has never heard and may never see. It is a difficult question.

For Aristotle at any rate there is no question here. Love of human beings, in Greek philanthropia, is not a virtue according to the Greek philosophers. And surely not for Aristotle. That is a charming quality in most cases but it is not a virtue.

Another Student: It seems that perhaps the concept of God above all men in Christian thought does mean to say something like all men are not capable of, but must aspire to, . . .

Strauss: Yes, but this is of God, of a super human being. And not of man.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The question is whether man confronted with any other man regardless of ethnic origin, race, or what have you, whether man is not under certain obligations toward other human beings? Whom he needs at least. Aristotle does say yes. But that does not mean that he can actively love all human beings.

Now let us go on where we left off.

Reader: ". . . (The tape was changed at this point) in the same manner in other subjects also and not allow side issues to outweigh the main path."

Strauss: So, in other words, the whole question which he has already taken up twice and now for the third time concerning the exactness to be expected -- here he had used before the term 'exactness' opposed to a sketch, to a general or abstract statement. But exact means now the concrete and detailed elaboration. The abstract statement is to that extent inexact. That is also one meaning of exact in Aristotle.

Now here this statement which we began to read is the third and final statement about how to speak on moral matters, or what kind of exactness to expect. Generally speaking, we see here that Aristotle's way of speaking and thinking is more like that of the carpenter than like that of the geometer, mathematician. Is this clear? The carpenter is satisfied with a straight line which is not literally and strictly speaking straight, but is perfectly sufficient for his purposes and the same applies to moral matters, in exactness in accordance with the nature of the subject matter. Now this much is said by Aristotle here about exactness. But he has something to add to that.

Reader: "Nor must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reasons why things are what they are. In some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established. This is the case with first principles and the fact is that primary things, it is a first principle. And principles are studied some by induction, others by perception, and others by some form of habituation, and also others otherwise. So we must endeavor to arrive at the principles of each kind in their natural man and must also be careful to define them correctly, since they are of great importance for the subsequent course of the inquiry. The beginning is admittedly more than half of the whole and throws light at once on many of the questions under investigation."

Strauss: Now after having spoken of the exactness to be expected, he comes to the question of the causes or principles. Now only this question, and not the question regarding exactness, was dealt with in the second and central statement. 1095a,30 following. In the first statement he had spoken only of exactness and not of principles. Here he speaks of both. In this statement there is no allusion to the fact as there was in the second statement that we might need knowledge of the why. Here he simply leaves it to thought as enough. The highest principle

is the principle of contradiction. If you know that it is impossible to say at the same time, to say that A is B and A is non-B at the same time, that's perfectly sufficient. You don't need a why for that. The question is whether the same can be applied to morals or more specifically whether it is good enough to say courage is a virtue. And that is our starting point. Whether it doesn't make sense to say why is courage a virtue or why is courage a good, the question which we have discussed earlier.

Now the principles may be found in various ways, by induction, by sense perception, and by habituation. Thomas Aquinas gives these examples. That every number is odd or even is found by induction. You look at a number which occurs to you and you see that it is either odd or even. That any living thing needs nourishment is known by sense perception. And that lusts are diminished if we do not give in to them is known by habituation. For example, by ceasing to smoke, that is Thomas' example of that.

Now let us begin with the next section.

Reader: "Accordingly, we must examine our first principle not only as a logical conclusion deduced from certain premises but also in the light of the current opinions on the subject."

Strauss: What is a logical conclusion as distinguished from a conclusion that is not logical. I think it is a wholly redundant expression. I mean it may be a wrong conclusion, but every conclusion is of course an act of our concluding, i.e., logically. In the preceding passage he had inferred what happiness is as starting from principles, and by starting from such principles as every being has a specific work, and this work may be done by the individual well or not well. By starting from this principle, he arrived at a conclusion that happiness consists in excellent activity according to reason.

Now he will check the result not by opinions as he translates but by their people say. People who have never taken the trouble of establishing definitely what happiness is, as Aristotle has done in the preceding chapter, nevertheless have opinions about happiness. And these opinions are available to everybody through what people say, and therefore we must see what people say and whether this agrees with what Aristotle has established in a more exact manner.

For Aristotle assumes, and this assumption he will make clear later on, that what people say cannot be simply absurd. That may sound strange because there is such a great variety of opinions and some must certainly be wrong, yet Aristotle has a certain respect for what people say, given the conditions. In other words, if what they say stays for a very long time, that means it cannot be a momentary fad or whim. Or if the men are wise men, then it stands to reason that it cannot be simply wrong. Now let us see what these sayings are.

Reader: "Now things good have been divided into three classes, external goods on the one hand, and goods of the soul and the body on the other, and of these three kinds of goods, those of the soul which we commonly pronounce good in the fuller sense and supreme."

Strauss: We pronounce. You see Aristotle is one of the speakers. Aristotle in the capacity of a simple man which he also has, apart from being a philosopher.

Reader: "But it is actions and the soul's active exercise of its functions that we closet as being happy. Hence, so far as this opinion goes, it is of long standing and generally accepted by philosophers. It supports the correctness of our definition of happiness."

Strauss: Let us see then, what are then these things (inaudible) by human beings? First, the tripartition of the good things, the good things of the soul at the highest and those of the body, the external goods. Now actions belong to the soul and not to the body or to the external things. The body does not properly act because the body doesn't choose and therefore it cannot act. The core of action according to Aristotle, as is made clear later on, is preferring, choosing, and choosing is the prerogative of the soul.

Now this opinion is old and of long-standing and if it had been merely a stupid view, it would have been abandoned a long time ago and accepted by the people who philosophize.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Under what condition does this make sense? It is a very relevant pertinent question -- no apology needed. Now if it is true that man is a rational animal, and if reason is to some extent always active in many (inaudible) to some extent, then the results of so-to-speak uncultivated reason, but (inaudible) reason, will not completely run counter to the results of a highly cultivated reason.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: What Aristotle does is this, and you can also explain it as follows. Someone presents a view which in this form was never presented before, and then if he is not a fool who wants to be admired as original and who said something unheard of, then he will say what I say is after all not as strange as it seems at first glance. What we all say -- you always admit this and this and this if you look at it more closely, it applies what I said.

Kant, when he (inaudible . . .) very original moral teachings, claims that he only elucidated, analyzed, what every human being when he says this is right, this is wrong, always implies.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There is something very much Platonic and Socratic in Aristotle. Plato has this notion as you know stated somewhat in an image, that man is the only being on earth who has seen the complete truth and what probably means the same thing, the ideas, prior to his birth. Man could not be man without a divination of the truth. Therefore this divination of the truth shows itself in the opinions of man in general. And therefore it is possible according to Plato at any rate by starting from any opinion however crude and half-cooked and however it may be, starting from it and seeing its effects and thus to be led to the full truth.

One can state it as follows. Apart from people who want to be originals or want to win an argument or try to defend a thesis as Aristotle meant it, what people say especially in an unguarded moment about matters not directly connected with their personal interest at the moment, this always contains sense.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Not theories, theories are a particular matter. Theories can very well be absolutely wrong.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, I think he says so in a way. He says in one of his works that the soul, and he means here from the context the human soul, is open to everything. I.e., the God as Aristotle understands it, would not perceive any beings lower than God. Man would perceive the divine as well as the human as well as the (inaudible). Since man is a microcosm -- though Aristotle doesn't use the term, he means that.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: No, that I would not say, but I think it is precisely because of its less technical character. It is a book for classrooms; it is meant for the general educated reader. But it is also written in such a way that people who want to have more than what the general educated reader wants find it. It is a peculiar combination. Whereas the Physics -- that would not be for the general reader.

Now let us read a bit more of that.

Reader: "It also shows it to be right merely in declaring the end to consist in actions or activities, for thus the end is included among goods of the soul and not among external goods."

Strauss: So, in other words, one could say this. Some people say happiness consists in living well, meaning an extraordinary

dinner, having dinner every night and all other pleasures at all times -- in other words, what you get, what you receive, and not in action and activities and actualizations. Aristotle says that this Aristotelian view agrees with what he said, according to which the highest things are in the soul, and do not belong to the external goods. But it will become clear from the immediate sequel.

Reader: "Again, our definition accords with the description of the happy man who lives well or does well for it is virtually identified happiness with the form of the good life or doing well."

Strauss: Well, doing well -- the term is of course ambiguous in English and can mean being successful, whether you have deserved it or not. But doing well in the Greek surely means doing well literally, acting well. So that happiness consists in acting well -- this confirms again Aristotle's definition.

Reader: "And moreover, all the various characteristics that are looked for in happiness are found to belong to the good as we define it. Some people think happiness is goodness or virtue; others, prudence, a form of wisdom; others again say it is all of these things, or one of them in combination with pleasure. Or not without pleasure. Another school included external prosperity as a factor. Some of these views have been held by many people and from ancient times. Others by a few distinguished men and neither class is likely to be altogether mistaken. The probability is that their beliefs are at least partly and indeed mainly correct."

Strauss: He gives the reason for which some of you have looked. The opinions of long-standing as well as the opinions of distinguished men, not likely to be altogether wrong. Otherwise he shows here many things said about happiness which seem to be mutually exclusive, because some people say happiness is identical with virtue and some people say happiness is identical with wisdom and some say it must be accompanied by pleasure, at least not accompanied by pain. These are very different views and seemingly mutually exclusive views. Aristotle will now show that they are provided for and taken account of in his statement on happiness in the preceding chapter.

Let us read one more passage.

Reader: "Now with those who pronounce happiness to be virtue, or some particular virtue, our definition is in agreement. For activity in conformity with virtue develops virtue, but no doubt it makes a great difference whether we conceive the supreme good to depend on virtue or on displaying it, on disposition, or on the manifestation of disposition in action. For a man may possess the disposition without its producing any good results, as for instance when he is asleep or has ceased to function from some other

cause, but virtue in active exercise cannot be inoperative. It will of necessity act and act well, and just as at the Olympic games the wreaths of victory are not bestowed upon the handsomest and strongest persons, but on men who enter for the competition, since it is among these that the winners are found, so it is those who act rightly who carry off the prizes and good things."

Strauss: Now the main point which he makes here -- he agrees in a way with those who say happiness is virtue, but not entirely. He says they don't make it sufficiently clear that it is the activity, according to virtue, and not merely the possession of virtue which makes men dormant, and he compares this difference to that between possession and use. The possession of shoes and the use of shoes. And analogously, the possession of virtue in a dormant position and the use of it, and the latter alone is what Aristotle means. The exercise of virtue. The Greek word is energeis, from which the English word 'energy' is ultimately derived, but the Greek word has nothing to do with energy in the modern sense. It means literally translated, being at work, being at work as distinguished from a mere potency or potentiality.

Now Aristotle takes up a subject of which he had not spoken, and we cannot discuss it today, -- his own statement of happiness -- which is nevertheless very important. Many people say that a happy man is a man who has pleasures or at least who doesn't live in pain all the time. Now this subject is not considered apparently in the general definition in the preceding chapter where pleasure didn't occur there at all. This he takes up in the sequel. Must we not assert that the happy man apart from exercising the virtues is also a man whose life is enjoyable. After all, it is thinkable that man would fulfill his duties very strictly and honestly and yet at the same time be very miserable. That would bring about that he is torn between two things, duty and pleasure. And what Aristotle will now show in his way is that this cannot be the case. That there is in happiness the three things which man desires -- the good, the noble, and the pleasant are all three present, or as we could say to make this distinction a bit more intelligible, the enjoyable, the resplendent, and the noble. And the solid rock-like that is the good. All three combined on the highest level possible for man is happiness. And that he will show in the sequel.

Lecture VII
Aristotle's Ethics, March 4, 1968

Let us continue where we left off last time. Aristotle had answered the question of what happiness or the human good is. It is the being at work of the soul in the mode of excellence. Of course, the human soul.

Now after Aristotle had answered this question by himself, he looks at what people generally said about happiness because it is improbable that the meaning of happiness, the end of all men, has completely escaped the human race. And therefore, by the general views, may be less neat, less exact, and yet not reflect the truth as stated by Aristotle. And we have read the latter part of this section and we should continue now in 1099a, 7. I have already mentioned at the last meeting that Aristotle now takes up a subject of which he had not spoken, and then presenting his definition, and that theme is pleasure.

Now will you begin to read again what we read last time?

Reader: "And further, their life is essentially pleasant, for the feeling of pleasure is an experience of the soul, and a thing gives a man pleasure in regard to which he is described as fond of so and so. For instance, a horse gives pleasure to one fond of horses, a play to one fond of the theatre, and similarly just actions are pleasant to the lover of justice, and acts confirming with virtue generally to the lover of virtue. But whereas for the many pleasures are in conflict with one another because they are not pleasant by nature, things pleasant by nature are pleasant to lovers of what is noble, and so always are actions in conformity with virtue. So that they are pleasant essentially as well as pleasant to lovers of the noble. Therefore, their life has no need of pleasure as a sort of ornamental appendage, but contains its pleasure in itself."

Strauss: So Aristotle has now settled this question regarding the relationship between happiness and pleasure. The question is whether this settlement is sufficient. Aristotle makes here a distinction between two kinds of pleasures, pleasures of pleasant things which are by nature pleasant, and those which are not. Now it is clear that the virtuous man does not necessarily have more pleasures of the vulgar kind than the vicious man. But Aristotle contends the true pleasures, the pleasures according to nature, are a preserve of the virtuous man, and therefore he alone has a truly pleasant life. In other words, the pleasant life of gangsters is not truly pleasant. It is a sham pleasure and that is what Aristotle implies.

Only for the lovers of noble things are the things by nature in fact pleasant. Now granted that truly virtuous men enjoy their virtuous activities, and that this enjoyment is the only true enjoyment, and that is what Aristotle presupposes here, does it follow from here that these activities are the only ones by nature enjoyable? Why should not pleasant food, drink, and so

on be by nature enjoyable? Now let us see what conclusions Aristotle draws from this.

Reader: "For there is the further consideration that the man who does not enjoy doing noble actions is not a good man. No one would call a man just if he did not like acting justly. Nor liberal if he did not like doing liberal things. And similarly with the other virtues. But if so, actions in conformity with virtue must be essentially pleasant."

Strauss: That makes sense. That a man who doesn't enjoy noble actions is not a noble character, but the question is are these enjoyments the highest enjoyments or are they the only enjoyments by nature enjoyable? In addition, there is the following difficulty. Let us take a man who denounces a friend, who has become a traitor to the authorities. This may be a just action. Is this an enjoyable action? So there will be at least some virtuous actions which are not enjoyable, and where one can say it is my darn duty to do it, but I hate it. I do not enjoy it. You see also that Aristotle has here made a qualification, that if this is so . . .

Reader: "But they are also of course both good and noble, and each in the highest degree if the good man judges him well, and his judgment is as we have said. It follows therefore that happiness is at once the best, the noblest, and the pleasantest of things. These qualities are not separated as the inscription at Delos makes out:

the noblest is the most just, and the
best is to be healthy, but the most
pleasant by nature is the attaining of
what someone loves.

For the best activities possess them all, and it is the best activity, or one activity which is the best of all, in which according to our definition of happiness, consists."

Strauss: The virtuous activities are pleasant to the highest degree and noble to the highest degree and good to the highest degree. Or, as we may paraphrase it, not to leave it in these terms which have been so frequently used, and have become stale, the virtuous activities are the most enjoyable, most resplendent, and the most solid. So all three considerations of pleasantness lead us to one and the same end. And of course the proper judge of what is most enjoyable and so on is (inaudible) man, to translate the Greek word literally, which is one of the many terms Aristotle uses for the virtues here.

He has a reference to these activities, or one of them, the best of them, is what we assert to be happiness. This is again a reference to the distinction within the excellent activities. This will prove to be the distinction between moral actions and contemplative actions. And the question is whether Aristotle can make his assertion regarding moral virtue. Perhaps in the

moral virtues, the coincidence of the enjoyable, the resplendent, and the good is not as clear as in the case of contemplation. We have not yet sufficient evidence for that. At any rate, there is a perfect harmony regarding the preferences which we human beings have. They all coincide, contrary to this inscription. A distinction is made between what is noble, (inaudible) noble or just, what is solid or good is to have good health, and obviously these are two very different things, and finally the most pleasant is to get what one desires. Three entirely different things. Aristotle says if you think each of them through, then you will arrive at one and only one goal, the highest human activity.

Reader: "Nevertheless, it is manifest that happiness also requires external goods in addition as we said, for it is impossible or at least not easy to play a noble part unless furnished with the necessary equipment, for many noble actions require instruments for their performance, in the shape of friends, or wealth, or political power. Also, there are certain external advantages, the lack of which sullies supreme felicity, such as good birth, good children, and personal beauty. A man of very ugly appearance or low birth or alone in the world and childless is not a happy man, and still less so perhaps is one who has children that are worthless, or who had good ones but lost them by death. As we said therefore, happiness does seem to require the addition of external prosperity, and this is why some people identify it with good fortune, and some identify it with virtue."

Strauss: So in other words this beautiful coincidence of the three considerations is not good enough because in order to be happy, man does need external goods. And these external goods are not necessarily given with the (inaudible) of virtue or virtue's intentions. And therefore there is a difficulty again not identical with the distinction between virtue and pleasure. But it is a distinction between virtue and the external goods' equipment, as Aristotle calls it, which virtuous activity is not possible. And Aristotle goes here quite far as you see. There is a minimum need for external goods necessary in order to act virtuously; for example, a man completely paralyzed in body and mind cannot possibly act virtuously. But does a man who is extremely ugly, bodily ugly, is by this very fact barred from being happy, seems to be enough to coincide with what we now hold, although I think with a little effort we understand it. We always see when we are confronted with extreme ugliness and our simple reaction to that -- we are repulsed. Of course we can control it as tolerably decent people, but that we have to control it shows that this is not exactly what we understand by human perfection. Other examples are perhaps less striking.

So the question is therefore -- can the highest good, can happiness, consist in virtuous activity alone, if this is the case? The enjoyment of these good things is by nature good, but pleasures deriving from noble actions are not sufficient

for happiness. This much Aristotle made clear. Now people have found a way out, as Aristotle indicates at the end of this passage. They say happiness is the same as having good luck, and for example, to be wealthy and have good looks are gifts of fortune, but then of course you don't have virtue here. And the alternative view is happiness is virtue, but the fact that these views are radically distinguished from each other shows that the problem of happiness has not been solved, although what Aristotle said in the preceding chapter will remain true with some qualification toward which Aristotle works its way.

Now is there any point you would like to raise here?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The simplest example is when Aristotle gives a discussion of chance in the second book of the Physics -- you dig in your garden and then you find a treasure. You can go treasure hunting, but then of course it is no longer a matter of chance if you find a treasure, but the point is that without intending, you will find it. Chance is that which is radically elusive and cannot be mastered. You mean to improve one's fortune? Yes, there are some ways -- by the right kind of job, but no one would say then that this is just a . . .

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the point is that this is then already no longer mere chance. Two people meet by chance; that means they did not intend to meet -- the one went downtown for this reason and the other for an entirely different reason, no agreement whatever. Wholly unintended and unintendable. Therefore your objection is not valid.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But it is not strictly speaking chance.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: They are not inherent in virtuous actions -- chance enters somehow, but they are not simply . . . because man has some influence. For example, on his wealth -- some men are very clever and other men are less clever.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Because sometimes people say it without believing it themselves.

Student: But what if they believe in it? If someone actually believes he's happy, feels happy, dances around, what reason would you give for calling this man unhappy instead of happy?

Plato does the same thing, although he uses different terms, but he appears to give a more satisfying reason -- there are certain parts of the soul, and certain parts of the soul are fostered by this or by that.

Strauss: Aristotle doesn't say. But still I think your question is a necessary one. Because our word happiness is not identical in the present-day meaning with the Greek word. We would not hesitate for instance to call children happy, and Aristotle would flatly deny that.

Now one can perhaps state it as follows. A happy man is a satisfied man, yes. But a moron may be perfectly satisfied. You know sometimes they smile all the day; they are perfectly satisfied. And Aristotle says no one in his senses would call him happy. Because by happiness we understand such a satisfaction as is enviable in the view of a sensible man. So enviable satisfaction, this is happiness. Only in a non-literary sense can we say we envy animals. We don't wish to be animals. We only have to think it through. It may seem to be very attractive to be a puppy and to have a wonderful master. The trouble is that you do not have any control, if your master dies or gets ill, you will be sent to the pound or who knows what. You have to think it through and it proves to be an unwise proposition to be a puppy. And the same applies to other animals.

And as regarding a child -- well, Aristotle makes this clear, a child is at best happy only by promise, and only a kind of sentimentality to which we modern men are much given would induce us to say the beauty of childhood, with all its promises, and yet we do not know how few of them will be happy. This is largely based on resolution. So let us take a somewhat more manly and sober view of the situation and then we will find happiness only among adults, who fulfill the desirable condition that they are doers of noble deeds.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .) is a man whose soul is at work in the mode of excellence.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There is no doubt about it, but we are speaking about a happiness which is enviable by a sensible man. Now a sensible man would not envy kings as kings, or for that matter presidents because there are quite a few things in the president's life as you read from the daily papers which are not enviable and of enormous responsibility.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Ultimately yes. Aristotle is not an "individualist" in the sense in which you mean, and I will say as long as people

talk of virtue -- people were not individualists in that sense. There is one and only one ultimate standard of human excellence and individuality does not affect it. Say the virtue of X may be coloured by his physiopsychic or psychophysiological make, and that is true, but this is uninteresting. The interesting thing for him is to be an excellent man. Whether Pericles' excellence differs from that of (inaudible), that's another question. The main point is that they are excellent men. If one is more excellent than the other, then it becomes interesting, because there are different degrees, but not the individuality as individuality. They simply assume that we are all individuals by nature and what our education or formation consists in our assimilating ourselves to one and the same. What does it mean the formula, to assimilate oneself to God? If that is the most important thing, obviously the preservation of the individuality is a strictly tertiary consideration.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, that would be the matter of a special discipline to which he refers called economic. The economy of the household or the acquisition of wealth.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, but political economy as we call it plays a very subordinate role in Aristotle as in classical thought altogether. And he will simply say well experienced people will know how to raise revenue and how to spend it for the greatest benefit of the community. It is a very special consideration to which Aristotle has not given much place in his work. From the same point of view one could say this. That since from Aristotle's point of view, the most decent way of earning a livelihood is by husbandry, that Aristotle should teach the gentlemen how to farm and how to raise cattle, which Aristotle never did. It so happens that Xenophon who belonged to the same world did try a treatise on gentlemanship and it contains a section on how to farm, for example, how one must cast the seed evenly and not unevenly. But it is not explained how to learn that; you are only told to master it.

Student: I have a difficulty or at least an apparent difficulty. Regarding what is pleasant by nature and what is not. Aristotle seems to imply here that most men are not truly engaged in pleasurable activities because their activities are not pleasant by nature.

Strauss: That seems to be the case.

Student: The question is how would one know what is pleasant by nature? There are certain things that are clearly natural in their pleasantness, but because of all sorts of disruptions, they are not engaged in those.

Strauss: Aristotle has devoted a considerable part of the Ethics to pleasure. The end of Book VII and the first part of Book X. Here he only is leading up to a proposition which saves perfectly this freest definition of happiness, and the coincidence of these three considerations, the good, the noble, and the pleasant. Now this would be not a nice thing to do -- if Aristotle said well, now the problem of happiness is solved, but he goes on for four or five pages in taking up the same question again because what he seems to have solved in the form of the question of the relation of the good and the pleasant comes back in the form of the question of the relation of the intrinsically virtuous actions and the extrinsic conditions of virtuous actions, the equipment.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Why is it more meaningful?

Student: Well, if one considers the pleasant the simplest -- it is true that a certain amount of equipment is required to engage in pleasant activities. It is not clear that that equipment is synonymous or as extensive as the equipment necessary for virtuous actions. It seems to me that it is easier for a man to indulge himself in terms of equipment than it is for him to be virtuous in terms of equipment.

Strauss: But would the same be true if we took the ordinary understanding of pleasure. Is it easier to enjoy pleasures indiscriminately or to make an effort in the highest direction? Is that not true?

Student: Well, that's true too. But once we grant him equipment necessary for virtue, at that point we assume that the pleasure inherent in virtue is higher or better ordered in the nature of the soul.

Strauss: But still it does not detract from the self-sufficiency of happiness. Happiness depends on something outside of happiness proper. Let us see whether Aristotle has answered your difficulty when we arrive at the end of the discussion on happiness.

Now let us go on. Read the last sentence of the preceding section again.

Reader: "And this is why some people identified with good fortune though some identify it with virtue."

Strauss: Namely happiness.

Reader: "It is this that gives rise to the question whether it is a thing that can be learned or acquired by training or cultivated in some other manner, or whether it is bestowed by some divine dispensation or even by fortune."

Strauss: Fortune is the same as chance.

Reader: "Now anything that men have is a gift of the gods. It is reasonable to suppose that happiness is divinely given. Indeed, of all man's possessions, it is most likely to be so, inasmuch as it is the best of them all."

Strauss: Now Aristotle raises the question regarding happiness in the most radical form. Happiness is the highest human good, but is it not so high or because it is so high, can it be in any way of human origin? Is it not more reasonable to say it has been given by the gods. Or perhaps it is merely by chance, an idea which occurred to us a short while ago.

Reader: "This subject perhaps may properly belong to another branch of study."

Strauss: The question belongs to another consideration. What consideration would this be?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes. We see here again that Aristotle presupposes that the Ethics must not be based on either physics or metaphysics. Yet, that is important, but still is the question which he raises not of the greatest relevance for Ethics, how do we become happy? Therefore . . . now go on.

Reader: "Still, even if happiness is not sent us from heaven, but is won by virtue and by some study or practice, it seems to be one of the most divine things that exist, for the prize and end of goodness must clearly be supremely good, and must be something divine and blissful."

Strauss: Happiness belongs at any rate, regardless of whether it is sent by the gods or not to the most divine things, for even if it is a consequence of human actions, it differs essentially from these actions because it is the prize given for them, and not the actions themselves. Divine does not necessarily mean caused by the gods; it may also mean resembling god or the divine. And this quality happiness has in contradistinction to the virtuous actions.

Reader: "And also on our view it will admit to being widely diffused since it can be attained through some profits of study or efforts by all persons whose capacity for virtue has not been stunted or maimed."

Strauss: Meaning if virtue has its root in man, in a divine gift or happiness, then all men in principle can become happy. Some exceptions are to be made. Some men are by nature truncated and they can therefore not become happy. If it were not accessible to most men, or to all normal men, it could be a privilege

of the few elected by the gods. That is the alternative, but even if it is, not all men, literally speaking, can acquire it because some are by nature truncated.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is a long question. According to what Aristotle says, happiness and virtue is open to all men who are not by nature truncated, because virtue is the perfection of the nature of man. That is metaphoric language when we say that some men are more truly men than others. We had a passage where Aristotle referred to that, or where he criticized Plato's idea of the good. All men are equally human beings just as all dogs are equally dogs or cats equally all cats. But some have greater disposition toward virtue than others.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: They have a greater prospect to be good men and even good men in the highest sense. This Aristotle does not deny.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In one sense, the question is correct because there are two levels of happiness, the level of moral virtue and the level of contemplative virtue. But apart from that, some men reach either of these levels or both levels more perfectly than others, but there are not different kinds of happiness apart from these two kinds.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I believe Aristotle would have agreed with that. (Inaudible . . .) to make the assertion that this world is the best of all possible worlds. By the way, from Leibnitz' assertion comes the word optimism. Optimism is originally the view of Leibnitz. The world is the best of all possible worlds. Aristotle never said it, but I think it is always implied.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There are many implications and polemical implications which are absent from Aristotle. Leibnitz is compelled to show that even original sin and eternal damnation, things which for Aristotle didn't exist, do not do away with the bestness of the world. One of Leibnitz' arguments is that after all the original sin took place on the earth and the earth is an infinitesimal part of the universe, and so this defect of life on earth may even contribute to the overall beauty of the universe (inaudible . . .). To repeat, Aristotle doesn't say the world is the best of all possible worlds but I think he would have agreed with that. The question would never arise for Aristotle for the

following reason, because Leibnitz' assertion that this world is the best possible world is because he assumes that the world has been created by God, and then the question arises why did God create the world as it is and not in any other way? And Leibnitz' answer is that he preferred this world to all other possible worlds because it is the best possible world. Therefore the question doesn't arise because there is no creation, and this is probably the simplest reason.

Now Aristotle as you have seen here makes a distinction between learning and diligence, we can say. Diligence or training. He leaves this open at this time how far learning on the one hand and practice on the other goes into the coming into being of virtue or happiness. Now shall we go on here?

Reader: "Again, if it is better to be happy as a result of one's own exertions than by the gift of chance, it is reasonable to suppose that this is how happiness is won. If things according to nature have a natural tendency to be ordered in the noblest way and the same is true of the products of art and of causation of any kind and especially the highest, whereas if the greatest and noblest things were to be left to fortune, it would be too contrary to the fitness of things."

Strauss: So happiness cannot come to men by chance, given the high rank of happiness and the low rank of chance. What we get by chance proper are only external goods and not the most important ones. I repeat again, the clearest example of chance given by Aristotle is you dig in your garden and you find a treasure. If happiness came through chance, it would not have any connection to virtue. Differently stated, chance is disordered, random; nature and art are orderly. Happiness and virtue have more to do with nature and art than with chance.

In this passage which we just read, you find the Aristotelian equivalent to the best of all possible worlds. The world may have all kinds of defects, but it is not so stupidly contrived as some people seem to think. That is the least which one would have to say that Aristotle conveys here.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In the Metaphysics, and he takes it up in a way also in the Physics. In the Physics, Book 2, he has a discussion of the alternative view, namely atomism. The world has come into view out of the aimless and meaningless meetings of atoms, and for Aristotle this means that the world is a product of chance. And Aristotle tries to show that it is impossible that the whole can be a chance event. By chance event we mean always an event occurring within a whole which does not have chance character. So chance presupposes a non-chancy world and that is the point which he makes there.

Reader: "Light is also thrown on the question by our definition of happiness which says that it is a certain kind of activity of soul according to virtue, whereas the remaining good things are either merely indispensable conditions of happiness or are of the nature of a (inaudible) and useful instrumentally."

Strauss: That happiness does not come from chance follows directly from the *logos*, as Aristotle calls it, what he translates from the definition of happiness. And the reason is this. The soul, of which a certain kind of activity, a being at work -- the soul is by nature and therewith the possibility of the virtue of the soul. Every natural being has the possibility of being perfect or imperfect. The actualization of this possibility of perfection must follow the possibility, must be adapted to that possibility. Furthermore, the other good things without which there cannot be happiness are in a non-arbitrary relation to happiness. That we need external goods, health and so on, this is not a matter of chance. We cannot replace these by other good things which are not suitable as conditions of happiness. So there is here order, intelligible order, and not chance. They do depend on chance to some extent, but they are not the core of happiness. That is the point which Aristotle repeats time and again.

Reader: "This conclusion moreover agrees with what we laid down at the outset, for we stated that the supreme good was the end of political science, but the principle care of this science is to produce a certain character of the citizens, namely to make them good and capable of performing certain actions."

Strauss: Doers of noble deeds. The view that happiness does not come through chance is confirmed also by the fact that happiness, the highest end, belongs to an art, that is the political art, and art and chance are mutually exclusive. In passing Aristotle makes this remark which he will repeat in a modified manner shortly thereafter. What is political science about? A contemporary political scientist says who gets what when. Aristotle has a somewhat different view. Politics is concerned with making the citizens men of a certain kind, a certain quality, namely good and doers of noble deeds. We all have to make up our minds sooner or later whether we will side with Aristotle or Laswell, and this as well as in some other matters.

Reader: "We have good reason therefore for not speaking of a horse or an ox or other animal as being happy, because none of these is able to participate in noble activity."

Strauss: In being at work of this kind.

Reader: "For this cause also, children cannot be happy, for they are not old enough to be capable of noble acts. When children are spoken of as happy, it is a compliment to their promise for the future. Happiness, as we said, requires both complete good-

ness and a complete lifetime, for many reverses and vicissitudes of all sorts occur in the course of life, and it is possible that the most prosperous man may encounter great disasters in his declining years, as the story is told of Priam in the epics, but noone calls a man happy who meets with such misfortune and comes to a miserable end."

Strauss: So Aristotle comes up again with a difficulty regarding happiness. It is assumed that Priam was an excellent human being and then through the fault of his good-for-nothing son Troy is eventually destroyed, and Priam is killed and he knows that his wife and all his sons will be killed and all his daughters will be sold into slavery. Now surely isn't this misery? Surely noone could call this excellent man in this condition happy. So happiness seems to become endangered by misfortune of a certain size.

One must be an adult human being in order to be happy. One can state what Aristotle means also as follows. If any being could be happy by divine (inaudible), a horse could be made happy. In other words, there must be a completely topsy-turvy world. Happiness depends undoubtedly on external goods. Noone would call Priam happy.

Student: Couldn't one argue that if Priam had been the most excellent of men, he would not have been a king in the first place and therefore would not have been subject to a kind of happiness -- this may sound silly, but juxtapose it in the case of Socrates and suppose (inaudible) had been taken off and sold into slavery, now this would have been a misfortune for Socrates but at the same time it would not have been, borne, directly on his happiness as an excellent man.

Strauss: The fact that when you read the stories about (inaudible), which regard her as an old battleax, does not prove that Socrates did not love her. The ancients were rather delicate in these matters and we don't know. She had some qualities; otherwise, Socrates wouldn't have married her, and the quality cannot have been wealth, that is clear, so she must have had some personal qualities. But still, why do you say that a king being unhappy is more bearable than somebody else?

Student: I didn't mean to say that the misery of a king is more bearable than the misery of Socrates -- it's just that it's the other way around. The king, just by nature of his being a king, is more concerned I suppose with what you would call the tertiary objects than is Socrates the philosopher or Aristotle for that matter.

Strauss: The king is more exposed to the vicissitudes.

Student: And what is more is that his focus is well, at a lower level.

Strauss: But still, I believe you take the fate of Priam too lightly. Aristotle finds a somewhat more subtle solution in the sequel.

Let me now add only one point. This peak, as it were, and he quotes this epigram and asserts that there is a perfect coincidence, the best, the noblest, and the most pleasant, and there is a perfect harmony, and this is easily called today optimism in a slightly different way. Aristotle had too sanguine a view of the human condition. Now this you must not believe for one moment. I read to you only one passage at the beginning of Book II of the Metaphysics. "The investigation of the truth is in one way hard and another easy. An indication of this is found in the fact that no one is able to attain the truth adequately. The difficulties of two kinds are the cause of the present difficulty not in the fact but in us, for as the eyes of bats are to the blaze of day, so is the reasoning in our soul to the things which are by nature most evident of all. This is the human condition. Man's highest happiness consists in knowing the truth. But we are by nature as able to see the truth as the eyes of bats are fit to see the blazing of the day." Therefore, there cannot be any question of Aristotle having been unduly sanguine regarding the human condition.

Now we go then over to the next point. Now Aristotle begins the solution of the problem in the next chapter.

Student: If whether or not something is a misfortune determined by the man to whom the misfortune occurs or are there certain things which are always misfortunes?

Strauss: In other words, that it is not a matter of mere whim? Otherwise, a man who has lost an envelope on which he had made a few notes of no importance whatever might become very disturbed. I have seen such people. Unhappy, but only he himself would regard him as unhappy. No -- the things which Aristotle mentions, loss of children, loss of friends, loss of good reputation, loss of all means of support.

Think of one well-known example, if Priam doesn't mean so much to you, Job. The fate of Job is an epitomy of misery. And this is not arbitrary. All human beings, except some inmates of lunatic asylums, doing this. All his children died, all his fortune lost, sick body . . .

Student: But could not a truly virtuous man, good man, not be sorry at the loss of his reputation?

Strauss: Sure, that is true. Aristotle will say it in his way, and I think he remains a bit closer to what one can expect of normal human beings. Of course some wise men, Stoics, have said that these are not goods at all, these external goods, and one can be happy under torture, and other examples of this kind, but this will not impress much the large majority of men.

Because they are understandably more attached to their children, to their friends, to their means of support, to their reputation, than these extreme sages are. Aristotle wishes not to make extreme demands on them.

Now let us then continue where we left off.

(The tape is changed at this point.)

Reader: " . . . for it is believed that also some evil and also some good can befall the dead, just as it can happen to the living without their being aware of it. For instance, honors and disgraces and the prosperity or misfortune of their children."

Strauss: The difficulty regarding happiness comes out most clearly in the saying of Solon, the Athenian legislator, that no one is to be praised happy before his death. As long as we live, our happiness is endangered. Now this saying is not quite clear, and therefore Aristotle mentions this ambiguity. It could mean, can only the dead be called happy, and this Aristotle rejects on the grounds that we understand by happiness activity, being at work, which is not possible for the dead. But Solon doesn't mean that only the dead can be happy. He means that only the dead are no longer exposed to the vicissitudes of fortune. Yet nevertheless these vicissitudes affect them, even if they are not aware of them, and Aristotle has explained this by an example taken from the *Livy*, for example a living man may lose his children without knowing it, but everyone who knows of the wealth of his children will say he is a man in misery, although he believes to love the children and believes to be happy. Therefore, the consciousness of happiness or unhappiness is not the sole consideration, why we call men happy or unhappy.

Now how does he go on?

Reader: "But here too there is a difficulty. For suppose a man to have lived in a perfect happiness until old age and to have come to a correspondingly happy end, he may still have many vicissitudes befall his descendants, some of whom may be good and equal to the fortune which they deserve, or the opposite, and clearly these descendants may stand in every possible degree of remoteness from the ancestors in question."

Strauss: In other words, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on.

Reader: "Now it would be a strange thing if the dead man were also to change with the fortunes of his family, and were to become a happy man at one time and then miserable at another. Yet, one the other hand, it would also be strange if ancestors were not affected at all, even over a limited period, by the fortunes of their descendants."

Strauss: Well, the difficulty is this then. Either the happy man is like a chameleon, and his happiness changes into unhappiness and vice versa all the time, or the dead man is thought to be also altogether indifferent to the fate of his children and to other things. Both alternatives are unbecomable and therefore and we return to the former difficulty to which we will soon find the solution. Do you see the point? It will become clear in the passages as we read a bit.

Reader: "But let us go back to our former difficulties. Perhaps it will throw light on the question we are now examining. If we are to look to the end and congratulate a man when dead as actually being blessed when he has been blessed in the past, surely it is strange that at the actual time when a man is happy, the facts cannot be truly predicated of him because we are unwilling to call the living happy owing to the vicissitudes of fortune, and owing to our conception of happiness as something permanent, and readily subject to change, whereas the wheel of fortune turns full circle in the same person's existence. For it is clear that if we are to be guided by fortune, we shall often have to call the same man first happy and then miserable, which will make the happy man to be a sort of chameleon or a house built on the sand, but perhaps it is quite wrong to be guided in our judgment by the changes of fortune, since true prosperity and adversity do not depend on fortune's favors, although as we said our life does require these in addition, but it is the active exercise of our faculties in conformity with virtue which causes happiness and the opposite activity, its opposite."

"And the difficulty just discussed is a further confirmation of our definition, since none of man's functions possess the quality of permanence fully as the activities in conformity with virtue. They appear to be more lasting even than our knowledge of particular sciences, and among these activities themselves those which are the highest in the scale of values are the more lasting, because they most truly and continuously occupy the lives of the supremely happy, for this appears to be the reason why we do not forget them. The happy man therefore will possess the element of civility in question and will remain happy all his life, since he will be always or at least most often employed in doing and contemplating the things according to virtue and he will bear changes of fortune most nobly, with perfect propriety in every way, being as he is good and true and four-square without reproach."

Strauss: So what Aristotle asserts here -- that is the line of the argument from now on. Happiness consists not merely in virtuous activity, but also in the equipment, as he calls it. The core of happiness is virtuous action. And not the things dependent on chance. He contrasts here the instability of fortune and misfortune with the stability of virtue. So it cannot easily be removed.

On the contrary, the misfortunes do not necessarily endanger happiness for they give opportunities for acting nobly and therefore the case of virtue is (inaudible).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This is not a theoretical book, but this is a book addressed to gentlemen, not theoretical men, and these gentlemen to say the least do not know whether they will be alive after death. You have a good example of that at the beginning of Plato's Republic -- old (inaudible), do you remember him? His worry is that he does not know will there not be punishments after death? Socrates does not try to tell him that there are not such things. Aristotle leaves this question here open, and he gives a reason for it a little bit later, namely for a simple human being, and I think we are all somewhere simple human beings, the thought that someone to whom we will (inaudible) in his life, will no longer in any way be concerned with us. Think of a child of 14 who loses his mother. The thought is unthinkable that at that point where there should have been the utmost concern there will be complete indifference. Is it not more philanthropic, more humane, to assume that this concern will continue beyond the death, the departed? In this way he enters into this way of thinking. Then he would have to open up a terrific theoretical issue -- think of the demonstrations of the soul given by Plato and what kind of an argument this would be. It is wholly unfit for the Ethics.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But this question came up very naturally, because there is a question of happiness, and happiness seems to be very frail, and this frailness was recognized by Solon when he said no one can be praised happy while he is alive and therefore the whole question of how happiness is affected and what happens to a man's nearest and dearest after his death comes up. Aristotle moves on a variety of levels and he leads us up from one level to another.

Reader: "But the accidents of fortune are many and vary in degree of magnitude and although small pieces of good luck has also a misfortune, they do not change the whole course of life. Yet great and repeated successes will render life more blissful since both of their own nature they help to embellish it and also they can be nobly and virtuously utilized. While great and frequent reverses can crush and mar bliss, for they cause pain and they hinder many activities, and yet nevertheless even in adversity, nobility shines through, when a man endures repeated and severe misfortune, not owing to the insensibilities, but from nobility and greatness of soul, and if as we said a man's plight is determined by his activities, none of the blessed can ever become miserable, for he will never do hateful or base actions since we hold that the truly good and wise man will bear all kinds of fortune in a seemly way, and will always act in the noblest

manner which circumstances allow, even as a good general makes the most effective use of the forces at his disposal, and a good shoemaker makes the finest shoe possible out of the leather supplied him . . ."

Strauss: So, in other words, if the general has a very poor army and there is no time for training them properly, yet his excellence will show in the use he makes of his very poor army. This is also true of the shoemaker who has very poor material for making shoes, and now Aristotle applies this to the virtuous man. If he is haunted by all kinds of misery, he can't make a great show, but he can with this very poor material at his disposal, lead a life much more noble than that of another man who has the same kinds of misfortune and lacks nobility.

Reader: "And this being so the happy man can never become miserable though it is true he will not be supremely blessed if he encounters the misfortunes of a Priam, nor yet assuredly will he be variable and liable to change, for he will not be dislodged from his happiness easily nor by ordinary misfortune, but only by severe and frequent disasters. Nor will he recover from such disasters and become happy again quickly, but only if at all after a long term of years in which he has had time to accomplish great and noble things."

Strauss: In other words, one presents the matter somewhat rhetorically. If you have a noble character like Priam or Job, he may be stricken with all kind of misfortune, but he will never be a contemptible wretch. He will never be a wretch. You can never say he's happy if he is stricken this way. Here you have a beautiful example of the inexactness of Aristotle's Ethics. How to draw the line here, and yet in a given case of judgment where there are men of experience will draw the line properly when confronted with this particular case and say this man is happy who is not a contemptible wretch and another man who isn't.

Student: The analogy to the arts -- the general who has a bad army, or the shoemaker who has the bad leather, would suggest that as soon as the virtuous man did have the proper materials, as soon as his luck changed, he would then be able to live the same life that he did before.

Strauss: Yes.

Student: But Aristotle says that the recovery would be slow. And it would seem that the recovery would be immediate if he still had the virtue within him . . .

Strauss: Sufferings. Aristotle thinks of the sufferings. But for the other side of the matter -- if we think only of wealth -- the virtuous man who has lost all his wealth will not be munificent, after he lost his wealth. After he has recovered it, he will be munificent again. And in this case there is indeed

no reason why -- no, Aristotle would say if he is indeed a virtuous man, he will not regain his wealth in a very short time.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, the classics were rather distrustful men. As Plato puts it somewhere when he says, if you use only just means for getting rich and another man uses both just and unjust means, the latter will become twice as rich and twice as fast.

Student: I was wondering if that statement didn't somehow apply, the bad fortune that this man has suffered eventually will affect him in terms of his virtuous activity as well. In other words, being a poor man, he may get out of the habit of extreme justice, because of his needs of the situation, but once he is comfortable again he may have a turn of mind that leads him to . . .

Strauss: No, I believe Aristotle has in mind the long healing of the wounds . . . and the . . . think of a lot of children, and good children, that a certain depression or sadness which disables us to do as many noble deeds as we otherwise could. Otherwise, it does not make sense.

Student: In the case of a general or some other man who is responsible for other men, say he's in a situation where he can act nobly and surrender his forces in the case of a defeat, or by means of fraud or some other relatively ignoble activity . . .

Strauss: Fraud in war is not ignoble?

Student: Well, if as a gentleman he goes over to the other commander and says, I give you my word as a gentleman that we will not escape, and then proceeds to do so, it is clear that he is not a gentleman.

Strauss: That is really a question and that has been discussed by the ancient (inaudible) whether in order to win a battle, such things, white lies, perhaps even including the word of a general, although I have never heard that, are not permissible and compatible with being a general. Aristotle was blissfully unaware of all feudal notions of points of honor . . .

Student: But the Greeks had . . .

Strauss: Did not have the feudal notions. That was observed very nicely by some commentator that when there was the Council of War during the Persian Wars and (inaudible) had one proposal regarding the (inaudible) in battle, and the Spartan commander, I forgot his name, had another notion, and the Spartan became very angry and used his whip to whip (inaudible). And (inaudible) said whip me, but listen to me. And these modern commentators thought that this was wholly unthinkable in modern times where there would be a duel first. This point simply didn't exist and wouldn't affect the situation.

Student: But that seems to . . .

Strauss: Therefore, also the word of a gentleman wouldn't mean more than on my word . . .

Student: That seems to imply though that the resolution of being a gentleman, that of a public man on the one hand and a private man on the other, is made here in two different directions. For Aristotle the public man has a certain kind of supremacy with respect to virtue in that he can do things which otherwise a private man would not do, whereas the more feudal notion would have it the other way around, that the private is in a certain sense superior to the public.

Strauss: At any rate, I do not see your difficulty. In other words, a general who lies or cheats in order to win a battle, in a just war, is not blameworthy. I mean there was never any quarrel on the part of Aristotle about men like that.

Student: But in a certain sense, he's not completely blameless.

Strauss: Oh yes, he is. If inexperienced people think he's a liar, then they have to grow up and learn that this is not a lie, at least in the sense of a blameworthy action.

Another Student: I'd like to ask another question about Priam. You made the point a minute ago about a perfect example of Aristotle's ambiguity, that it was possible to not be happy but at the same time not to be a wretch either. So we have Priam who is not happy but who is not a wretch either, which is a sort of a way of stating it that he is happy without knowing it.

Strauss: No, no. He is not happy. He has suffered these terrible misfortunes. Think only of what happened to Hector. So he is not happy, and it would be somehow an insult to common sense to say Priam is happy, as the Stoics would have said. But on the other hand, to say he is a contemptible wretch is absurd, seeing the nobility and the seemliness which he observed in these terrible situations even.

Student: But we are talking about nobility, and the person who is displayed as a concomitant of happiness or a concomitant of the other. All I want to get is a kind of expansion of the happiness as Solon understood it to maybe another kind of happiness the way Aristotle is taking it.

Strauss: I think what Aristotle understands by happiness is not far-fetched. The trouble is only that precisely because he remains loyal, in the ordinary understanding of happiness, he gets into these conceptual difficulties. Our ordinary concept of happiness is exposed to these difficulties. On the one hand we are compelled to say that the core of happiness is virtuous

activity. We cannot envy a sensible man, an absolutely abominable vicious fellow, who has (inaudible) -- that goes without saying. If we see now this virtuous man, perhaps because of his virtue, (think of (inaudible)'s argument), he is exposed to all kinds of misery including torture and what have you. What shall we say in that case? Do we cease to respect him deeply for this reason, because he has come into this misfortune? But on the other hand, we cannot say that he is as happy as he was before. And I think Aristotle has provided for this state of affairs by his general remarks about the lack of exactness in this study. There is no simple formula possible. Happiness equal to the doing of noble deeds or exercise of virtue -- that is true, but, but, but . . . nothing we can do changes that, since it has not been brought in by a mistake of Aristotle's reasoning -- that is the character of human life. And where is it written that human life is formulated in simple formulas? That is the hope of some of our human beings, but it has no ground in fact.

I think we have to leave it here. If possible, we will finish the reading of the first book next time.

Lecture VIII
Aristotle's Ethics, March 6, 1968

Strauss: Aristotle is discussing in the chapter we are now reading the saying of Solon that no one can be praised happy before his end, before his death. This is a consequence of the fact that the relation between happiness and excellent human activity is not clear. The core of happiness is excellent human activity. But happiness requires in addition something else -- what Aristotle calls equipment, or to take another case which is not immediately related -- equipment is things which are required for doing excellent things, for example, we must be in a reasonable state of health of body and mind to do excellent actions. But you do not have to be very handsome in order to do that. Now why should extreme (inaudible) prevent a man from becoming happy? This is not clear. Non-happiness does not seem to be a necessary condition, a necessary instrument for acting noble, and yet it is so, according to Aristotle's assertion.

So there is an excess of happiness beyond nobility of actions. Another illustration and a more simple illustration is the fate of (inaudible) or of (inaudible). Assumedly a man of excellent character who suffers the greatest miseries which a human being can suffer -- is he still happy in this miserable state. The mere fact that we call him miserable seems to show that he cannot be happy.

Aristotle's way out is that the core of happiness is nobility of actions. And he would presumably say that this man of extreme ugliness and repulsiveness, the way in which he bears that and does not become resentful, is molded as it were in his whole being by this misfortune. That is a matter in which his nobility of character can show. The core of happiness is nobility of action -- yes, but, and if one is dissatisfied with it, Aristotle says, give me a better formula, and if the Stoics, for example, had this formula, these other things don't count, they are not even good things; they are preferable, but they are not to be called good in any strict sense. This led to the famous Stoic paradoxes whereas Aristotle's view is precisely not paradoxical. But it sticks to what we all would ordinarily admit. That is not unimportant if we want to understand human things, and human affairs.

Now I think we should continue in 1101a, 14.

Reader: "What then prevents us from pronouncing that man happy who realizes complete goodness in action, and is adequately furnished with external goods, not for any casual period but throughout a complete lifetime in the same manner. Or should we add that he must also be destined to go on living in the same manner and to die accordingly, because the future is hidden from us and we conceive happiness as an end, something utterly and absolutely final and complete."

Strauss: If we take him only as he is now and do not consider his future fate and eventually his end in terms of his death, and what

happens when you take too narrow a view of happiness.

Reader: "If this is so, we shall pronounce those of the living who possess and are destined to go on possessing the good things we have specified to be supremely blessed, though on the human scale of bliss. So much for a discussion of these things."

Strauss: So we can call living men, like Aristotle, happy or blessed, but with the qualification blessed as human beings can be blessed, with this big question mark -- what will happen to them in the future? This we do not know.

Reader: "Happiness of the dead is not influenced at all by the fortune of their descendants and their friends in general seems too heartless a doctrine, and contrary to accepted beliefs."

Strauss: Due to the opinions, he says. The fate of the descendants and of the friends must be considered important in the happiness of a man, even after the man is already dead. The alternative would be heartless, as he translates -- loveless would perhaps be a better translation, and in addition transcounter to the opinions. The opinions and the two reasons go together. The accepted opinions are inspired by the opposite of lovelessness. Men's desire for love, for being loved, or attachment, forms the opinions which are generally accepted and that is the rationale.

Student: I just wanted to ask whether there is a textual reason for saying that this refers only to men who are already dead. It seems that it could refer to a man who is alive, too.

Strauss: That goes without saying. If a man has alive -- he has spoken about this prior. There is no explicit reference here, but when he says the fate of the descendants, that refers to not only the children and grand-children but also the young. Beyond. Their own great-grandchildren. I think he means that.

Reader: "But the accidents of life are many and diverse and vary in the degree to which they affect us. To distinguish them in detail would clearly be a long and indeed endless undertaking and a general treatment in outline may perhaps be enough. Even our own misfortunes, then, though in some cases they exercise considerable weight and influence upon the course of our lives, in other cases seem comparatively unimportant. And the same is true of the misfortunes of our friends of all degrees. Also, it makes a great difference whether those who are connected with any occurrences are alive or dead, much more so than in a tragedy whether the crimes or horrors are supposed to have taken place beforehand or are enacted on the stage. We ought therefore to take this difference also into account and still more perhaps the doubt that exists whether the dead really participate in good or evil at all. For the above considerations seem to show that even if any good or evil does penetrate, the effect is only small and trifle, either intrinsically or in relation to things, or if not trifling, not of such magnitude and kind as to make the unhappy or to rob the happy of their blessedness. It does then appear that the dead are influenced in some measure by the good

fortune of their friends, and likewise of their misfortune, but the effect is not of such a kind as to render the happy unhappy and vice versa."

Strauss: That is a quite complicated statement. In two cases, in a, 35 and in b, 6, Aristotle doesn't use the ordinary word for the dead, but a somewhat more solemn word, , derived from the Greek word, , which means to be tired, to be ill, and in the perfect it is here, to have become tired, and then finally the dead. I would translate it departed, in order to indicate the preferential element which this word here has.

So Aristotle compares here the terrible things which happen to a man after death, which happen to his descendants and friends, to the terrible things which happen during one's lifetime, to the difference to the terrible things which are merely told, in the prologue of a drama, a tragedy, and the things which happen on the stage. Now of course we are more affected by what we see on the stage than by what say a messenger or someone else tells in a prologue. And the dead, the departed, are less affected by the misfortune of their descendants and their friends than they would have been if they were still alive. But Aristotle implies that they are far away, a kind of weak rumor reaches them, and therefore they are not deeply affected. And they are pre-occupied with other things. And also it takes a long time until the rumor reaches them. And we know from experience that if we hear of a friend whom we have not seen for a very long time that he died some years ago, that is a slight difference than if we know that he died just now. So this is not simply superstition, what Aristotle gives us here, but these are very human observations.

So the main point is this. One's happiness is not seriously influenced by what happens to one's nearest and dearest after one's death. It has a certain influence, but not very great. So whether Aristotle believed that there is such a life after death in which one can become aware of the fate of one's nearest and dearest -- that is hard to decide in this passage, but we only say that is enough for the present purpose. Granting that this is the case, we can disregard it in our discussion of happiness.

Now we are then at the end of the discussion of happiness, with one limitation which we will see soon, and we can say every normal man of good family who is repulsively ugly and of course not morally can become happy. That seems to be the matter. There is a certain awkwardness in this result, because as we have seen on an earlier occasion, in 1099b, 18-20, that the highest good must be available for all those who are not truncated with regard to virtue and must be available to them with some learning or teaching and assiduity. Quite a few people are not truncated and yet are poor or lack other equipment and cannot be perfectly happy.

Regarding the discussion of this chapter, I might refer to Thomas Aquinas' commentary which shows here clearly the difference

between Thomas and Aristotle. Thomas argues on the basis of the principle accepted by Aristotle that a natural desire cannot be vain, i.e. a natural desire must be fulfilled. This leads Thomas, given the fact that the natural desire for happiness is not fully fulfilled, not unqualifiably fulfilled, to the conclusion that our natural desire for happiness points toward a bliss in another life. That is surely not what Aristotle suggests. How would Aristotle argue against Thomas?

Student: Such a desire seems to start from chance.

Strauss: But a natural desire is one which is fulfilled. You mean it is fulfilled according to Aristotle in most cases, but not in all cases?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And Thomas would of course say there is no chance in this, but providence. And therefore that will be the difference; that is one way of stating it.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But what is the principle involved? Aristotle would say every natural desire and no natural desire is in vain. But a desire for what is intrinsically impossible is not natural. But it proceeds from certain questionable opinions.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That he does in a way; he says blessed as human beings. This might lead to the view that there is another form of bliss.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Sure he would say that, but he would also say that it makes sense to speak of the felicity of this life. And that is the term which he uses all the time in this commentary on the first book of the Ethics. It makes sense and it is even necessary. Think of practical questions -- the greatest happiness of the greatest number -- is an expression which makes some sense, does not it? Whether it is the soundest political principle is another matter, but it makes some sense, and therefore we must make allowances for a limited and qualified kind of happiness.

Student: Aristotle would merely say that 'I'm not talking at all about any happiness other than the happiness that can be achieved by man here and now. So I'm not talking about the happiness of the dead.

Strauss: But still the question -- but he does it. Does he not bring it up?

Student: Only insofar as it is connected with the happiness that

has been achieved on earth. He is very careful, so it appears, not to go beyond that and not talking about how the dead are happy as dead men. The dead are made more happy or less happy a little bit not by what happens to them in the afterlife, but what happens to their ancestors and descendants on earth.

Strauss: Yes, still -- but how is their happiness affected by what happens to their descendants on earth? Happiness after death is being considered, and I think Aristotle could not well avoid that. You said Aristotle is only concerned with the happiness which can be achieved by human action, but Aristotle has shown that this action which can be achieved by human action depends on so many things which men themselves cannot procure for themselves.

Student: No question, but Thomas would say something entirely different. He would say that the happiness of man after death depends not so much on what he did in life and what his ancestors did, but on what happens to him after he dies.

Strauss: Well, to some extent I think it depends a bit on what he did in his life. But let us assume he never repented his evil deeds and then there is a fair assumption that his life after death will not be too happy.

Student: Yet isn't there a difference though, but perhaps this isn't significant between Aristotle's discussion of happiness and not only, but also Plato's. Plato discusses what happens to a man in the after life in terms of what actually happens to him in the afterlife, and not in terms of what happens on earth and how he is affected by it. Aristotle doesn't appear to discuss the fate of the soul in the afterlife.

Strauss: No, no, but still his discussion implies some thought about it, because if the dead were absolutely dead, then the question couldn't arise. But this view that the dead are absolutely dead is a loveless view with a view to the nearest and dearest, because the thought that someone who has been greatly concerned with you will now be completely indifferent to your fate is hard to bear. It's a hard thought, a harsh thought, and a loveless thought. It may be a true thought, but this is not the only consideration in human matters whether it is true or not.

Student: I don't understand exactly the argument about the distinction of chance. It seems to me that the very fact of a natural desire for happiness can be interrupted by such a thing as chance implies the conclusion that Aquinas makes. Because Aquinas didn't take into consideration chance, (inaudible . . .) he rejects the possibility that natural desires could become incomplete because of chance. I don't understand why chance is a suitable argument against Aquinas.

Strauss: If it is true what Aristotle says, that properly equipped and properly bred men will be happy, and we find cases

in which people who are not properly equipped and not properly bred, or rather the other way around, who are properly equipped and are properly bred, but not happy, and the simplest answer would be that these are the exceptions. Now just as people who are born with four fingers instead of five on one hand, that is against the rule and that is also called by Aristotle chance. And thus for people like (inaudible) or (inaudible), these are rare cases, chance. This was I think how you meant.

Student: But how does that argue against Aquinas. What I think he says is that those instances themselves demonstrate the necessity of an after life in which . . .

Strauss: Sure, no, that is true, and Aristotle's argument would have to be in the last analysis that such an afterlife is impossible, because of the dependence on memory for example on the body. Aristotle does not have the Thomastic view, that the soul is a substance independent of the body, which only for certain purposes and certain connections needs the body, say for sense perception.

Student: It seems to me the stronger argument on the side of Thomas is not only in the accidental case that a good man is made unhappy, but rather saying that possibility always somehow disturbs the happiness of the happy man. It is not that in the accidental case that the good man is unhappy, but the good man is always less than happy because he is always worried that perhaps this chance will happen . . .

Strauss: But would he be a good man if he were always worried? If he would pay more attention to the things not dependent on his will, on his choice, and put such a great store by the things which do not depend on his will -- is this not -- if someone worries too much, is this not as it would be called today a kind of mental disturbance in itself? And Aristotle would say a vice, because Aristotle would say that you can get rid of that if you apply your mind properly.

Student: But even Aristotle himself says that you have to consider that this man who is going to be happy, is going to be favored or at least not completely disfavored by chance for the rest of his life, before we can call him happy. But we can never know that. So in other words any attempt to call someone happy is always sort of somewhat uncertain because you never know that the next minute he is not going to become . . .

Strauss: Yes, but he would probably say that the world is crazy, but not quite as crazy as that. In other words, the fate of (inaudible) is not the normal fate of an excellent human being.

Student: But even if it is only these impossible things of an excellent human being . . .

Strauss: But it is an unreasonable worry, and that is a defect of courage. I mean intelligible, and we must have compassion with people who do that, but it is still a moral defect we would say.

Student: But even aside from the worrier, there's the person like Aristotle who says well, what does it mean, or when are we allowed to call someone happy . . .

Strauss: But he comes down at the end with the assertion that . . . surely noone would call (inaudible) in this situation a happy man. There is some absurdity in that. But then noone would call him a despicable or contemptible wretch, as one would do that of someone who is say justly condemned to death, and to use an example which is no longer fit, but as people say in the 17th and 18th century, (inaudible . . .).

Student: In a certain sense, though, the phenomena of non-happy people is more widespread. I would assume that some people have a natural inclination for contemplation or toward that type of happiness, and yet noone could ever fully achieve that type of happiness. I mean Aquinas' argument comes on that level, not on the level of whether there's a physical attribute . . .

Strauss: Yes, but Aristotle grants that. I think I read to you last time a passage from the Metaphysics where Aristotle compares us to bats, bats and their relation to the light -- that is our relation to the truth, and yet Aristotle would say what else can you reasonably expect. You cannot define happiness by our desires or wishes. You can only define happiness with a view to what is human possible.

Student: In this sense, though, isn't Aristotle himself, I don't know what the correct word is -- he's different than is Plato, in the sense that isn't it in some way the Platonic conception of the good life connected with the desire for a good which is in a certain sense incommensurable with the average man . . .

Strauss: Plato did not write a treatise as Aristotle did, and one would have to go into the whole Dialogue and it is always a long question. But Plato seems to teach the (inaudible . . .) and that is of course true.

Another Student: (Inaudible . . .) shifted the argument to the afterlife rather than . . .

Strauss: He is compelled to take this up because there is a certain complication regarding happiness. This complication causes Solon to say that noone is to be praised happy before his death, and then the issue of death and afterdeath comes in in this manner, and he doesn't wish to shirk that.

Student: (Inaudible . . .).

Strauss: After all, we must know the human good. Is this not true? What is good for man as man. And then of course we have to know negatively such notions of the human good as are not reasonable, because otherwise they might obfuscate our thoughts and our actions.

Student: But strictly speaking, that would be a question (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: But it cannot be the theme. That is a somewhat complicated relation. I will now state it in a dogmatic manner. We must make a difference between the *de iura* and the *de facto* situation. Now *de iura*, ethics is completely independent of physics or metaphysics. Man has certain natural inclinations which culminate in his desire for happiness. And the naturalness of the inclinations means in the case of man that man is aware of these objectives, and he has a o an awareness of the order of rank between them. That to have a well-shaped soul is more important than to have a well-shaped body, and this is also known to people of any delicacy.

So we know the ends of human life, and within these proper limits then, we find the means to them, and there is an indefinite variety there. What you do in Alaska or what you do on the equator to be happy will be greatly different. That applies not only to airconditioning and such things, but . . .

Now, so we don't need any further knowledge, except that supplied by our common sense, as we say. At all times there are false opinions regarding the good human life, at all times. Think today of communism as an example, and these false opinions make impossible commonsensical, sound, practically-wise action. Therefore it is necessary for the teacher of ethics or politics to engage in a theoretical criticism of those theoretical opinions that endanger sound practice.

Now *de facto* you can therefore say is in need of a theoretical defense of its basis, and this is implied by Aristotle, but it is not made the theme. Therefore there is very little discussion of theoretical false opinions endangering practice.

Student: In a certain sense it would be impossible to write the Ethics, or at least how Aristotle writes the Ethics, without having previously answered the metaphysical . . .

Strauss: Yes, that one can say -- it is the same Aristotle who writes the Physics and the Ethics, not only that it so happens, but you see the same style of thinking, and the Aristotelian view that the true being *par excellence* is this here dog, and not atoms. You know the four elements; you know the Platonic ideas. This is the same spirit which animates his Ethics. This incarnation of common sense.

Student: To evaluate (inaudible), you have to have a metaphysical understanding . . .

Strauss: We use the word metaphysical with great ease, and it is not an Aristotelian term. I mean a certain book of Aristotle was called by its editors the Metaphysics, and only because it took the place in its arrangement after the Physics which is a literal translation of metataphysica. That is the origin of our word. There is a thing he calls the first philosophy. That is what he gives in his book on Metaphysics. But it is wiser to take the independence of the Ethics seriously than to question it. We run across passages where we see the limitations of this independence. But it is more important for the Ethics as a whole to see that it is meant to be independent of any theoretical science. The dependence on them becomes necessary in the first place because there are so many false theories around which obfuscate our natural understanding of the objects of human action.

Student: Somehow that natural understanding only becomes significant if you engaged in first philosophy.

Strauss: Why should not, just as cats and dogs and horses and birds have certain desires peculiar to them and without being taught by anyone, natural, why should not also men have some objectives peculiar to his nature, fitting his nature, as the object of the desire of the horse is in agreement with his nature. Why should it not be so? Of course there is a big complication. Man has an awareness of them as objectives which dogs, cats, and so on do not have. Yet it is certainly true. This means that there is an essential difference between man and non-man. This is a difference which Aristotle brings out by saying that man is an animal which possesses discourse or reason. But in spite of this enormous difference, this generality, specific nature directed at specific ends is common to man and other living beings.

Student: (Inaudible . . .).

Strauss: No, no, and therefore he speaks of habituation in that case and not of practice. There is a long discussion of how virtue is acquired. That is not immediately pertinent to what we are concerned with now.

Student: It seems odd for Aristotle to say that (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: What I said was this -- it is not natural to desire the impossible.

Student: So therefore it is not natural . . .

Strauss: The final solution to the difficulty comes eventually at the end. The most solid happiness and the true happiness is the happiness of contemplative life. And there these differences are not that important. They cease to be important on that highest level. But the first sentence of the Metaphysics, that all men desire by nature, that is a starting point for Aristotle and his understanding of happiness -- well, eventual understanding,

not the one with which he starts in the Ethics. And from this it follows that men desire by nature above all the highest kind of knowledge because if you desire knowledge, then you can be -- by you desire by implication, knowledge which is the most comprehensive and most fundamental of all knowledge. That does not mean that all human beings in fact have that knowledge, because there are so many abstractions and impediments to it that this can never fully develop in most cases, and yet it is the highest human objective.

Student: I guess what Aquinas would say about this is that there are many things which we do not have the (inaudible) to achieve . . .

Strauss: Sure.

Student: And he would say that since this desire is natural, (inaudible)... but points to the desire for satisfaction not in this life but in some other life.

Strauss: That is true, and that is in a way at first glance a superior solution. But you get an equivalent of the difficulty in another form, namely if then happiness after life, heaven or hell, and now the majority of men will not deserve heaven. There is a difficulty then on another ground, too. So in other words, a solution according to which all men can be happy in the sense that they have a very high chance of becoming happy, is too sanguine. According to the pre-modern view, and you know the view which prevailed in the last centuries was, or the last century we should perhaps say, is that if this is so, we must redefine happiness so it can be achieved by political, communal action for everybody. And preferably even without the individual doing much about it. And you know due to political action only. This is also I believe not free from difficulties. But at any rate, Aristotle's view -- Aristotle makes a certain tactical assumption such as the scarcity of natural resources which inevitably leads to the consequence that the human beings of independent means and I mean not necessarily very wealthy will be always a minority, or in the battlefields, the poor will always be with you. And they, according to Aristotle are disqualified. But given his assumption, he acts reasonably. Now we have learned that this assumption is wrong, that the economy of scarcity can be replaced by the economy of plenty. The difficulty is only that this solution leads to difficulties of its own. And I believe we cannot diagnose properly these difficulties if we do not bust the case wide open and consider alternative views of human happiness and the view of Aristotle and its implications. In addition, our modern view, produced by people like Bacon and Descartes in the 17th century, are consciously directed against Aristotle and at least in this sense based on Aristotle. Because if you oppose something, and if your thought comes into being through opposition, to another position, your position is in an important sense based on it. I would like to continue that but we have to read a bit more.

Student: You were I thought unfair to Aquinas in the sense that

for Aquinas it is at least naturally possible for him to achieve the end, whereas for Aristotle it is a natural impossibility for all men to achieve contemplation . . .

Strauss: But then what does this mean in practical terms given the fact which for Thomas is an original sin.

Student: But there is another fact of incarnation.

Strauss: But is there a distinction not between the elected and the damned. Is there not a kind of predestination there?

Student: But not naturally.

Strauss: Surely not naturally because the whole question is now on a supernatural basis. Therefore you dispose of all natural difficulties by transcending the natural toward the supernatural. But you get difficulties of their own thing.

Now we must now turn to the next chapter which concludes the discussion on happiness. The situation is this. Virtuous activities are the core of happiness. Happiness is in principle available through human causation. That is what we want. Then we are the producers of our own bliss and that is given to us. It's wonderful, but Aristotle says and that is the beginning of the next chapter.

Reader: "These questions being settled, let us consider whether happiness is one of the things that we praise or rather one of those that we honour. For it is at all events clear that it is not a mere perpetuity."

Strauss: Or ability or so. What we have to know about this distinction is only this. Abilities are things which can be used well or ill, and therefore do not belong to the praiseworthy things because which can be misused is as such not praiseworthy. Now the other things, the interesting things, are divided into things deserving praise and things deserving reverence. That is better than to translate it by honour because the praiseworthy and the honourable are the same, deserving reverence, deserving to be revered.

Reader: "Now it is seen that a thing which we praise is always praised because it has a certain quality and stands in a certain relation to something, for we praise just men and brave men. In fact, good men and virtue generally, because of their actions and works, and we praise the strong, the swift of foot, and the like on the account of their possessing certain natural qualities and standing in certain relation to something good and excellent."

Strauss: So praise refers to a man's having a certain quality. A good runner, and we have in mind that it is praiseworthy because it is productive of certain actions or works, swift running, just actions, and what have you. So the implication already here is that praiseworthy is lower than the things to be revered, because it has this relativity, not in the same thing in which the term is used in relativism, but it is relative to action.

It does not have this intrinsic superiority which the other objects have.

Reader: "The point is also illustrated by our feeling about praises addressed to the gods. It is evidently ridiculous that the gods should be referred to our standards, and this is what praising them amounts to, since praise as we said involves a reference to an object of something else."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Praise is relative, namely human actions, and Aristotle goes here so far to say that if we praise the gods, and that does not correspond to our usage, if we praise the gods, we praise them with a view to us, for the benefits that they give to us or their misfortunes and so on and therefore one cannot praise the gods strictly speaking.

Reader: "But while praise belongs to what is relative, it is clear that the best thing is not praise but something greater and better, as indeed is generally recognized since we speak of the gods as blessed and happy, and also (inaudible) is the term that we apply to the most god-like men. And similarly with good things. No one praises happiness as one praises justice. But we call it a blessing, something higher and more divine than things with praise."

Strauss: There must then be something higher than praise or praiseworthy. And these are according to the general notions the gods. But closer to our subject, happiness, in contradistinction to virtues or virtuous actions. Happiness belongs to the same sphere to which the gods belong. And virtuous action does not. That is quite surprising, after we have heard hitherto that virtue is the core of happiness. There is something in happiness which transcends virtue, as we have seen before. And Aristotle says that that which transcends virtue is in a way (in a way is my addition) higher than what we can possibly do. We can also say being revered are beings not for such and such a quality -- honor father and mother, honor thy father and thy mother if they are good, the meaning being that there is something in parenthood which deserves reverence independently of goodness and badness. Now the same is true of course of the gods. The gods cannot be measured by the standards of human virtue. Because of their qualities they are to be revered.

Now come to think of it, what Aristotle says is not so alien to what we mean. The word we translate by happiness, the Greek word eudaimona, and this is of course a word which we use very frequently, and therefore it has lost much of its force, of the force of the Greek word eudaimona, having a good demon. But we use another word from time to time, more rarely perhaps, blessed. Blessed things. For example, to have many children and good children. This is a part of happiness, as Aristotle sees it. We call it also sometimes a blessing, and then a very different connotation comes in, and then a blessing is somewhat higher than

what we can do for ourselves. This is a phenomenon to which Aristotle refers here.

Reader: "Indeed, it seems that Eudoxis took a good line in advocating the claims of pleasure to the prize of highest excellence when he held that the fact that pleasure, though a good, is not praised is an indication that it is superior to the thing we praise, as god and the good are, because they are the standards to which everything else is referred. For praise belongs to virtue, since it is this that makes men capable of accomplishing noble deeds."

Strauss: Now he refers to Eudoxis as a famous mathematician of whom he speaks later on. Eudoxis was a hedonist and held the view that the good is identical with the pleasant. Aristotle disagrees with Eudoxis as will appear later. Here he uses Eudoxis' view only for illustrating what he means.

The difference between the praiseworthy and the things deserving reverence can even be used for making a case in favor of pleasure. And pleasure has this peculiar character, that you cannot strictly speaking produce it.

Can you quickly look up 1174b, toward the end? In Book X.

Reader: "But the pleasure perfects the activity not as the fixed disposition does, being already present in the aged, but as a supervening perfection, like the bloom of health in the young and vigorous."

Strauss: Yes, a supervening perfection, something which is like the bloom. This bloom is not the same as health, and yet it is something very wonderful. That is in a way Aristotle's last word on pleasure. Therefore in this sense one can say it is divine, insofar as man cannot produce it, at least at the higher forms of pleasure.

Then there comes a brief digression which we read.

Reader: "While (inaudible . . .) deeds accomplished, whether of the body or of the soul, however to develop this subject is perhaps rather the business of those who have made a study of encomia."

Strauss: There are two kinds of speeches or writings, praises which we know especially in the form of eulogies, and another are encomia. The praises consist of enumeration of virtues and the encomia consist in the description of his deeds. This was a distinction which Aristotle obviously accepted.

(The tape is changed at this point.)

Now that is the final statement then. So the supremacy of happiness in contradistinction to virtue and virtuous activity is

maintained by Aristotle. Man owes the best lot to himself, although what he does is the indispensable prerequisite of his perceiving the best. Therefore his virtue is an indispensable condition for happiness. Now from this view, that man owes the best to himself, owes the best lot to himself, it follows that the right posture towards the best and therefore toward life in general is gratitude, not self-reliance, (inaudible) posture of demanding. Happiness in a way as it was said before is God-sent or God-given. The phrases occurred in 1099b, 9-10. That is the end of the discussion of happiness. And if this is not elegant, as the mathematicians speak of elegance, Aristotle had warned in advance that we cannot expect this kind of elegance when we speak of human things and especially of human happiness, which is a frail thing, and therefore we cannot speak about it without some hemming and hawing, and this is not Aristotle's fault. It is the fault, if it can be said to be the fault, of the things themselves. And to be loyal to the things themselves is perhaps the ambition of Aristotle more than of anybody else. So this is then the end of the discussion of happiness, and in a way the end of Book I, because the chapter which follows is already the transition to Book II or even to the whole rest of the work.

Now this is a good moment perhaps to give a brief survey of the plan of Book I up to this point. This may be helpful also of reminding you of what we may have forgotten.

Now there is a first section going up to 1095a, 13 where Aristotle speaks of the many ends of various kinds and the corresponding manyness of arts leading up to the suggestion that there is a highest art, the political art, and therefore there is also presumably a highest end, the object of that highest art. Aristotle concludes his discussion by a remark on the exactness to be expected in this investigation.

The second section up to 1095b, 13, the highest good, the highest end, is called by all men with the same name, namely happiness. Therefore there is some agreement among men that there is only one highest end, because it is no accident that they all use the same name for it. In this brief section he discusses also what kind of principle of the investigation we can reasonably expect. He does not speak there of exactness.

The third section, leading up to 1097a, 14 deals with the various false opinions about happiness -- A, popular opinions; B, opinions of wise men, and in this case only the opinions of a single wise man, namely Plato.

The fourth section, 1097a, 15-b, 21 -- Aristotle gives here some general determination of what happiness is.

In the next section -- fifth section -- 1097b, 22-1098b, 8, he gives these definitions of happiness, his definition on happiness, his logos on happiness. This is concluded again by a reflection on exactness and on the kind of principles with which we may have to be concerned.

Then in the next part, 1098b, 9-1099b, 9, the sixth part, Aristotle confronts his *logos*, his definition, with what is generally said about happiness, and here the pleasant things come to the fore at this time, and therewith the difficulty caused by the misfortune of the good man.

Seven, 1099b, 10-1101b, 9, can any man be called happy while he is still alive? The solution of the difficulties, virtuous activity is the core of happiness, and therefore (inaudible) can never have become a wretch.

And then a kind of compensation for the seventh part, 1101b, 10-1102a, 4, happiness belongs to a higher sphere than virtue as virtuous activity, and I think here in this way you see the difficulties with which we are confronted, but the difficulties are not just due to Aristotle's special prejudices or preoccupations or what but they lie in the subject matter, and they would come out in very different forms in non-Aristotelian premises, but come out they would.

Now we should by all means read the next chapter, and I would like to say only one word about our present plan of how we shall proceed. I think we should read Book II and the first part of Book III because this is a general discussion of virtue. After all, we have to know what virtue is, after we have heard so many good things about her. And then that we get a somewhat more exact or concrete notion of what Aristotle says by virtue, we should read the section on the first virtue that he discusses, courage, and on the two virtues which Aristotle regards as particularly praiseworthy, one is called magnanimity, and the other is called justice. Magnanimity we discussed in Book IV, and the whole Book V is devoted to justice. We cross the bridge, what we will do afterward, when we have come to it. We should read also Book VI and sections of Book X. That is generally my plan.

Now shall we then at least begin with the next chapter.

Reader: "But inasmuch as happiness is a certain activity of the soul in conformity with perfect virtue, it is necessary to examine virtue, for this will probably assist us in our investigation."

Strauss: So Aristotle returns again to the assertion which preponderates in his presentation -- the core of happiness is virtue and therefore we must naturally investigate virtue above everything else. Yet for the sake of better understanding of happiness, to this extent the supremacy or primacy of happiness is preserved here.

Student: I wonder if there is a political motive in that, to sway the opinions of the gentlemen who are reading this. There is an inevitable ambiguity between the core of happiness being virtuous activity while at the same time happiness in a kind of way

is superior to virtuous activity because it consumes virtuous activity. Virtue is in a kind of way almost shunted in the background.

Strauss: Not quite. I believe that has to do with the substantive difficulty, and we do not have to trace the difficulties of these defects to the heroes. It has to do with the things you have in mind only with a view to the fact that, from Aristotle's ultimate point of view, the contemplative life is the happy life, and therefore the questions as they arise on the level of moral virtue are not in the final form in which the question of happiness poses itself. But it poses itself on the level of moral virtue to most men. It is very important to understand that, especially politically.

Student: Isn't it reasonable to understand that the relationship between virtue and true happiness in Aristotle is somewhat of a Platonic relationship -- a Platonic participation?

Strauss: You mean that the merely moral man, the perfect gentleman, participates in the true happiness to some extent. Yes, that is all right.

Student: Can we understand it also this way on a somewhat higher plane -- that happiness being the supreme good, virtuous being good, there is a relationship between the individual good and I won't say the idea of the good, but something like that, in much the same way that it is in Plato -- in other words, does Aristotle really come back to this type of relationship?

Strauss: No, I mean the ideas in the Platonic sense are out. There is an end of man, a perfection of man, and this perfection is strictly understood one and the same for all men, although most men are paradoxically (inaudible) from it. Yet all men must be judged in the light of that. We need the unity of a standard, although we do not need necessarily a unity of the actual goal for all men. There may be a variety of goals, higher and lower, and it is necessary because of the complications. There are all kinds of activities which are needed in society and some require more qualities of the mind and character than others, and that is so, and therefore to expect the same, to demand the same from all men is unreasonable, (inaudible) Platonic and Aristotelian view.

Now let us go on.

Reader: "Also, the true statesman seems to be one who has made a special study of goodness, since his aim is to make the citizens good and law-abiding men."

Strauss: Whether goodness is a translation of the Greek word aretē, which is ordinarily translated by virtue, some people translate it now by excellence, because they want to get rid of the unpleasant meanings of virtue as a witty man has said,

virtus in Latin derived from vir of man, (inaudible), the manliness of men, and this has come now to mean the chastity of women and that is a very narrow part of virtue. So I warn you so that you don't think there is another term when he suddenly speaks of good.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I think someone should, especially if something is unpopular for unreasonable reasons, then one should translate very literally and not shirk the unpopularity.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: He discusses this in the Politics somewhere, not here. Perhaps we take it up when we come to Aristotle's discussion of virtue. Surely Aristotle does not say virtue is knowledge or science. Now here this point -- he gives here a further reason why we should study what virtue is. The highest good is the object of the highest art, namely the political art. But the true political man wishes to make the citizens good and law-abiding. Now what has law-abiding to do with good? A law-abiding man is a man who obeys the laws, regardless of whether they are good or bad. That is a difficulty of which no one was more aware than Aristotle. But in the best case, what the law-abiding man is really meant to be, to obey good laws, to be a -- now I read to you this remark about the desire of the true political man, and this can be illustrated by a passage in Xenophon's Memorabilia, Book III, Chapter 2. It is too -- not too long, and it is a very charming chapter, so you should read it. I can read to you only the concluding remark.

"By these considerations on what constitutes the virtue of a good leader, Socrates disregarded everything else and left only this much, that it is the function of the good leader to make happy those whom he leads."

Now Aristotle is very much concerned with happiness as we have seen, but he does not say interestingly enough that it is the task of the true political man to make happy the citizens. He only says that it is his task to make them good and doers of noble -- and obedient to the law, so the distinction between happiness and virtue is here effective, though not explicitly stated. Happiness and virtue belong together, and they are not simply identical, as we have seen before.

Now the next passage and then we are through.

Reader: "As examples, we have the lawgivers of Crete and Sparta and others, if there have ever been others."

Strauss: Your amusement is not wholly unjustified; that is quite true.

Now I read to you a brief remark from the seventh book of the Politics, 1333, 5 following. "Even those Greeks of the present day who are reputed to best government, and the legislators who gave them their constitutions, do not appear to have ranked their government with regard to the best end, or to have given them laws and education with a view to all the virtues, but in a vulgar spirit have gone back on those which promised to be more useful and profitable. Many modern writers have taken a similar view. They commend the Spartan constitution and praise the legislator for making conquest and war his sole aim." And so on. . .

And there are other passages. That implies that the Spartans and Cretes, of whom he speaks here so highly, were not such wise legislators as they seem to be here. This difficulty was of course observed by professional commentators, but they have a simple way out. It was written by Aristotle at a different time, and then they figure out when did he write the second book of the Ethics and when did he write the seventh book of the Politics. The book of (inaudible) and Aristotle is the most well-known document of this approach. You should perhaps read, if you have not done so before, Ernest Barker's critique of (inaudible) in the introduction to his translation of Aristotle's Politics where he tries to show on what slippery ground these hypotheses are based.

The reason is very simple -- Aristotle begins at the beginning. The beginning has to do with this gentleman, this perfect gentleman, who had pro-Spartan sympathies, which we know from Thucydides and so on -- pro-Spartan sympathies, and this is no reason why he should question them. When they are more advanced in their training by Aristotle, he will tell them that Sparta and Crete are very far from being models of political perfection.

Lecture IX
Aristotle's Ethics, March 11, 1968

Now I sketched to you last time two broad comprehensive considerations which we must never lose sight of when engaging in a rather detailed study of at least some sections of Aristotle's Ethics. Such considerations are needed to counteract a danger which is perhaps particularly great in our age of ever-increasing specialization. Namely, the danger being that we exclude from sight, from consideration, very important matters in the main hope that George will take care of them. George being another specialist, maybe a sociologist, psychologist, analytical philosopher. The passing explanation for this passing of the fact was coined about fifty years ago by Coint, one of the greatest heirs and in some ways the classic interpreter of modern science, namely of that science which is definitely non-philosophical. You remember what I said last time about the philosophic character of science? --In the old sphere-- and the separation of philosophy and science that is taking place in modern times.

Now he called his position positive philosophy. In other words, it was still philosophy, no question about that. But the peculiarity was it is positive, and therefore since that time the word 'positivism' has been of general use. The main thesis is this, that the way towards the truth is that of modern science. Modern science is an approach to all theoretical and practical questions. It was preceded by a radically different approach. The first was the theological one, where all things were traced to personal powers or personal power. The second stage we call metaphysical, and that is represented by Plato and Aristotle particularly, and by the great system builders of the 17th century in modern times.

Now both approaches, theological and metaphysical, are bankrupt, and the only one which is theoretically feasible or at the same time offers some hope for human practice is the positive approach, the approach peculiar to modern science.

Now what are the peculiarities of positive science in contradistinction to theology and metaphysics? The chief answer is this: theology and metaphysics try to answer the question, why? This question is abandoned by science in favor of the question of the how? Why do bodies fall? What is the secret of gravitation? This is theological or metaphysical, according to Coint. Whereas the question, with what speed do bodies fall? The how of it? That is the scientific question.

Now there is this difficulty here. It may be true that men cannot answer the question, why?, and therefore one acts prudently by limiting oneself to the question of the how. Yet the questions of the why remain. They are not meaningless questions. They are only perhaps unanswerable questions. They continue to bother man, despite or because of all professors of science. So much so

that even an infinite progress of science offers no hope of ever giving us an answer to the question why, of ever solving the enigmas with which man is confronted.

We have no right to assume, in addition, that man has infinite time at his disposal for progressing. Even granting that in an infinite progress all riddles would be solved, I don't know that there will be an infinite time at our disposal. And not only because of the atomic bomb, but also perhaps because of a built-in limitation of the duration of human life on earth. Hence the unsolved and insolvable questions of the why threaten the whole edifice of science. They deprive it of its ultimate importance. For example, if science can teach us a lot regarding means or any ends that we might choose, but cannot tell us what ends to choose, and on this, ends, everything depends, and therefore the dignity of the science is greatly threatened by the fact that it cannot answer the question of the why.

This has led to a popularly non-phenomenon and which was called by sociologists, the flight from scientific reason, and I think that all they meant by it was that people were fundamentally dissatisfied because their deepest and most serious questions were beyond the ken of science. It is a question which I am in no position to answer but which is often being raised about this fact, this essential limitation of science, the dissatisfaction with what science can do, and this contributes to the unrest on some campuses.

So we try to counteract the narrowness of specialization by engaging in broad and comprehensive considerations and we do this for good or evident reasons. However poor our achievement may be, our pursuit in itself is sensible. I believe that I have shown that it is sensible. In doing so, I have shown that there is a rational end, gravity about fundamental issues. for we cannot help if we understand something as evidently necessary, to do it unless we are prevented from doing so by an accidental (inaudible).

It is impossible to say whether my theoretical objection of last time or whether my moralizing, my exhortation, my preaching, begin. Where the one stops and the other begins. They are inseparable. Where I made the (inaudible) but allegedly vicious transition from practical questions to wiser questions. To that extent I hope I helped you somewhat understand Aristotle's Ethics, to look at things from Aristotle's point of view, from the point of view which does not permit the fact-value distinction.

I would like to make a remark in passing. The fact-value distinction must not be taken too seriously or literally. It cannot be maintained in any long run, in any broad and not merely technical examination. For instance, I read in yesterday's Los Angeles Times the following: "We have failed to understand the implications of the new vision of man which is accepted by an ever-growing number of social scientists, that so soon as sufficient food, clothing,

or shelter are available, man is forced by profound psychological pressures to drive toward self-actualization. Individuals who are deprived of the opportunity to strive to achieve their full potential will drift into personal disorientation or drift into violence." Here is the new vision of man. "Man is happy and gentle, provided his comfortable self-preservation is guaranteed." New vision. "Man is not by nature good, for by nature he does not have the means of comfortable self-preservation, but after man has conquered nature, as he has done now, he can make himself happy and gentle." He uses much more highfalootin' expressions, but I prefer them in simple language. It is of course presupposed here that to be happy and gentle is good and to be unhappy and violent is bad. I think we can grant this without being petty. To be at peace with oneself, to know what one wants, and at peace with one's fellow man, is to be preferable to the alternative. But even on the most superficial level, a difficulty arises. Are food, clothing and shelter the only ends of man, and does the non-availability of these three items alone make man unhappy or violent?

If we have read a few novels, we will know that there is a thing called 'unhappy love', also unhappy marriage, and that this has nothing to do with food, clothing, shelter. The practical conclusion therefore, known by quite a few of our contemporaries, is you must have a solution of this food, clothing, shelter problem, either utilitarian or in the marxist spirit, but you must also have a solution to the problem of unhappy love, and that means factor analysis. So marxism, utilitarianism, and psychoanalysis together have a very great power in present-day circumstance.

But without disrespect to hunger, are there no other ends or good things which a true vision of man, in contradistinction to the new vision of man, would have to consider? What about premature violent death? Whatever one may say against Aristotle's Ethics, he does not make the mistake of taking such a narrow view of the human ends or goods as the new vision of man does. This is another simple consideration why we should pay some attention.

Now to return to the chief subject of today's lecture, I have asserted last time that we must start from the broadest possible considerations, and I sketch two such considerations. The first I indicated by the terms machiavellianism and anti-machiavellianism, and which I then replaced by the opposition of materialism and idealism. This seems to be the most fundamental alternative, the most comprehensive alternative, an alternative for either, if not with man, surely with philosophy. An eternal alternative.

The second consideration I considered the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. The fundamental difference between antiquity and modernity, between ancient materialism and modern materialism. And between ancient idealism and modern idealism.

This alternative is not eternal, but would have to be called historical. It is not easy to say which of these two fundamental alternatives is more fundamental than the other, or even whether this question made sense. Let us then leave this question open. I illustrated the quarrel between the ancients and moderns by contrasting the Aristotelian division of philosophy and the one that prevails now. I suggested that the difference between modern and ancient philosophy has something to do with the attempt at human mastery of the old and the denial of the possibility or desirability of such mastery.

Accordingly, the ancient thinkers held that the good life is the life according to nature, nature as it were establishing the norm, the end, for our lives, the end not having its roots in man's establishing or setting in contradistinction to the depreciation of nature in modern times. The strive for liberation from nature's apron strings and thus to make men (inaudible). Replacing nature by reason and eventually by this.

Now I will fill up my sketch by speaking more particularly on the quarrel between ancients and moderns within political philosophy or political science. I say "or" political science because in pre-modern times that was political philosophy. The same thing, and now we have the separation. Which of the two alternatives is sound?

I have to say a few words therefore about the general character of classical political thought. If we contrast say Plato or Aristotle with political science now, what strikes us most is that in ancient times political science, political philosophy, had a direct relation to political life. This no longer exists. The questions which political philosophy or political science raises were the same as those raised in the political arena and that shows itself in the fact that in Plato and Aristotle's political science, there is hardly any term which did not stem from the political arena, but was hatched in academies.

The political philosopher or political scientist looked in the same direction as the citizen or statesman. He does not look at political life from without. And this has radically changed in modern times.

I will draw a picture . . . so if this is the standpoint of the citizen or statesman, he looks at political things in this perspective. The political philosopher or scientist of ancient times stands also here and looks here. There is an alternative way of looking at it, namely to stand here and to look at it from the outside.

Now the difference between the political philosopher or political scientist and the citizen or statesman, according to the older view, is this, that the political philosopher looks in the same direction, but (inaudible); in other words, this will go on, will

be continued beyond the point beyond which it was continued (inaudible . . .) -- that the political philosopher is not supposed to have a faction which noone else could fulfill -- a very high function. Namely in the first place to be the arbiter par excellence. Political life is political conflict, conflict of various groups -- the most common in ancient and modern times -- the poor. But sensible men do not want conflict, but harmony and peace. And how to establish peace? You have an impartial arbiter. But to do this on the highest level and regarding the permanent questions of political science would seem to be the function of the arbiter par excellence. That was meant to be the political philosopher.

For the same reason, and I cannot now elaborate it with the necessary clarity, the political philosopher was regarded as the teacher of the political men of the highest order. The political men of the highest order are the legislators, not in the sense in which the word is now used when you have many, many legislators, but the men who elaborates the codes which should last for quite some time and not be revised every second day.

Now the legislator is concerned only with giving the best laws for his community. But he cannot truly know that the best laws for his community if he does not know what the best laws are simply. And therefore there must be men who raise the question of what the best laws are -- the teacher of legislators. More precisely, where did Aristotle teach, laws are not the fundamental political phenomenon. What laws are and are not possible in a given society? This depends on the politeia, which I translate by 'regime'. The common translation is constitution. What it means primarily is the factual distribution of power. Therefore the question arises, not what are the best laws, but what is the best regime? And of this best regime they say that it must be possible without assuming miraculous or non-miraculous change of human beings, but human beings as they are by nature. So it must be possible, but the possibility does not mean that it will be a probability. Both Plato and Aristotle say very emphatically that it is improbable that the best regime will become actual.

Neither Plato or Aristotle found any example of what they regarded as the best regime anywhere at any time. This did not bother them at all for the following reason. I use now again a word alien to Plato and Aristotle. The best regime is an ideal, and not an ideal among many, but the ideal. Now an ideal does not cease to be an ideal by never being actual. This I think is very well known to all of you. So you need at any rate a standard of judgment, a standard for the diagnosis of the actual -- in what way it is good, and in what way it is bad. Therefore, you must get a complete picture of the perfectly good society regardless of whether it is actual. Whether it will be actual or not depends on chance, as well as, as it is put in the Republic, it depends on coincidence, the coincidence of philosophy and political power.

Now this much about the practical approach. We see the origins of the modern approach by turning to Machiavelli, especially the Prince, Chapter XV.

"It now remains to see what should be the ways and conduct of the prince in dealing with his subjects and his friends, and because I know that many have written on this topic, I fear that when I too write I shall be thought presumptuous, because it is a great break completely from the principles laid down (inaudible). But since it is my purpose to write something useful, I think it more effective to go back to the practical truths on the subject than to depend on fancies, imagination, and many have imagined republics and principalities that never have been seen to exist in reality. So there is such a difference between the way men live and the way they ought to live, that anybody who abandons what is for what ought to be will learn something that will ruin rather than preserve them because anyone who determines to act in all circumstances the part of a good man must come to ruin among so many who are not good."

Now this is one of the most important passages ever written. The ancients took their bearings by how men should live, by how men ought to live, and therefore they arrived at imaginary principalities. Incidentally, when he speaks of imaginary principalities, he speaks not only of Plato and Aristotle, but of the Bible as well, the Kingdom of God having the same characteristics as the thinkers and philosophers like Plato.

So what Machiavelli tries to do is to use again a convenient (inaudible) to make politics a realistic science, to take men as they are. Thus the chances of actualization of the desirable order increase enormously. If you make these high demands which Plato and Aristotle make, there is no practical chance. But if you put the goal lower, as Machiavelli did, and think it is still a goal, still a kind of ideal, then the chances for actualization will increase. In other words, by lowering the goal, you enable yourself to conquer chance. And that is precisely what Machiavelli says in his work.

The ancient philosophers spoke of virtue as the most important virtue. Machiavelli uses the Italian equivalent of virtue, but this has a very new meaning. It has something to do with political virtue, but even that is obtuse.

Now I read to you another passage. "The true history of political philosophy cannot be written on the basis of explicit (inaudible)." If my memory doesn't deceive me, Thomas Hobbes never mentions Machiavelli. And yet without Machiavelli, there is no Thomas Hobbes. Now Hobbes says in his epistodedicatory to his Elements of Law the following statement:

"To reduce the doctrine of justice in policy, to lose an infallibility of reason, there is no way but first to put such principles sound for a foundation that passion not mistrusting may not seek to displace. First we have to start from foundations agreeable to passion." We have to find the principle of political life a passion and that passion he finds in the fear of death, something very low, but very comon, and therefore something trusted.

Thomas Aquinas, in his discussion of natural law, made a distinction between three natural inclinations, one toward self-preservation, one toward preservation of the species, and one toward knowledge and in particular, knowledge of God. What Hobbes does is to (inaudible) the two higher inclinations, because that would lead to all kinds of complications, and to stick to the lowest but strongest, namely the fear of death.

Now this foundation was taken over obviously by Locke and Rousseau. Hobbes already, but more explicitly Locke, put the emphasis on comfortable self-preservation, meaning if your life is very clearly threatened by a potential killer, then you are perfectly pleased if you can just preserve yourself. But apart from such harsh things, you would like to preserve yourself comfortably.

At any rate, in connection with these modern movements, starting in a way from Machiavelli and more visibly from Hobbes, you have an enormous increment in the importance of economics. Economics in the way we use the word today did not exist. Economics meant management of the household. There was surely no academic discipline dealing with that. But now a science of this kind of thing emerged (inaudible . . .) and that was the work of man called Sir William Petty. He was a friend of Hobbes.

Sir William Petty went so far as to figure out the worth of a human being, and he went about it in a very sensible way. He said (inaudible . . .).

It is understandable that some noble mind revolted against this (inaudible) political science in the 18th century. And such men like Shaftsbury -- Lockewas a kind of tutor of Shaftsbury, when Shaftsbury (inaudible . . .), Rousseau, Locke, and one could say that this reaction to 17th century political philosophy led to a restoration of the moral level and dignity of classical political philosophy. That surely needs a very thorough investigation, but one thing remains changed, despite that protest, that revolt, these noble minds against the two practical minds of which we have spoken before, and that is this -- the concern with the actualization of the right political order -- this remains unchanging. In other words, the simple view that we need an idea in order to see clearly as to what we regard as good and noble, and independent of whether there is (inaudible . . .), this is not (inaudible.)

I read to you another passage. This is from Kant, Kant being one of the sternest moralists, but he also had this very practical side connecting him with Sir William Petty. "People were in the habit of saying that the establishment of the right social order requires a nation of angels." Kant said, "hard as it may sound, the problem of establishing the just social order is soluble even for a nation of devils, provided they (inaudible), /meaning provided they are shrewd enough that it is not profitable for them to be law-abiding citizens than to be criminals/." "The fundamental political philosophy is one simply of a good organization of the state of which a man is indeed capable." In other words, if you arrange things in such a manner that crime doesn't pay, and you don't have to be a very noble soul for wishing that and for doing that, then you have a (inaudible) political philosophy.

Now this concern with the actualization of the right political order shows up in a different way in Hegel, the reasonableness of the historical process. There is a convergence, we can say, of the ideal and the actual. And that is a necessary convergence, because the reasonable is actual and the actual is reasonable. So there is a necessity of the actualization, and according to Hegel's view, this has now been achieved. The historical process is now complete.

This view of Hegel seemed very implausible to people after him, and today there is hardly anyone who is a Hegelian in this sense of the word. Today it is generally taken for granted that the historical process is unfinishable, that man is always in the midst of it and never at its end. This leads to great difficulties of its own. Perhaps we will find another occasion to go into these.

Today I bring myself to the most massive difficulty, and this is the view that now prevails. That is the view based on the distinction between facts and values as an unbridgeable gulf. Because this view implies that all values are equal, before the tribunal of reason, But of course not for the valuator, the man who values reason will not regard the values going with tyranny or connected with tyranny (inaudible), but the scientist, the social scientist, is not supposed to be an evaluator in his capacity as a social scientist, and as such the values are equal for him.

And now we observe here a phenomenon known from economics, (inaudible . . .), the bad values drive out the good ones. The unbelievable valuation of which we are (inaudible). A few examples -- culture meant originally the cultivation of the mind and especially of the highest powers of the mind, and this word 'culture' could be used only in the plural, the human mind being of one fundamental character, there can only be one culture. Today everyone speaks of cultures, and the understanding is that they are all equal. When the term cultures came out in the plural, there was a distinction made between high culture and low culture. But today that is completely abandoned. All men have cultures. All men are cultured. So there is something (inaudible),

because when you say a man is cultured, you mean something slightly different than when you say that we belong to a culture. The culture may be one of juvenile delinquents, and you are not likely to call them cultured.

One may say, and a question which to my knowledge has not been taken up yet by social scientists is that a lunatic can have culture, but (inaudible . . .).

Now another term with which we can see what is happening before our eyes is that of personality. (Inaudible . . .) the highest blessing on the children of the earth is their personality, and that implies that very few people are in fact personalities. This is still recognized. For example, I believe that Dinah Shore is a TV personality and that a garbage collector is not a personality. Here, personality however approaches almost the meaning of celebrity. Originally it meant that you could be a personality without being a celebrity, and you could be a celebrity without being a personality. And yet today although personality has this value meaning, every man is said to have a personality structure. And it is hard to see how he can have such a personality structure without being a personality. So this difficulty illustrates again what is happening after the complete collapse of the difference between the ideal and the actual.

Now this much to complete my general introduction. Last time we began our reading of the Ethics, and we have seen that Aristotle stresses on this first page which we read the multiplicity of human ends, and yet he made clear there is not a mere confusion or discord because there is a hierarchy of the arts. I trust you remember this section of our discussion.

Now let us read the section read last time, 1094a, 14-16, when he spoke of the architectonic arts. What he says is this, that there is an infinite variety of ends, but there are also kinds of pyramids of the subordination of some arts to others, and therefore of the ends pursued by one kind of art to the ends pursued by another. The difficulty is this. There is a kind of pyramid where Aristotle (inaudible), and whether this pyramid will fit into a single unistic harmonistic scheme -- whether there is only one pyramid, that is the question.

We will look at the examples which Aristotle gives. It is easy to see that the art of shipbuilding is in the service of sailing, of using the ship, and therefore subordinate. But health seems to be something choiceworthy for its own sake, and at least according to many, wealth is something choiceworthy for its own sake. Do health and wealth both come together and form a part of the whole, so that the possible conflict is resolved? We have not yet had an answer from Aristotle.

And now let us continue, but in fairness to you, do you have any difficulties or questions regarding what I stated? Now is the time.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: No, that is true, from Machiavelli's point of view one would have to say that he rejected fantastic goals and established in their place rational, sensible goals.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That may be so, but the question is whether the teaching on this subject is in order if it has this function. For example, the Middle Ages. The medieval universities with their scholastics, they frequently had the effect of mere routine rigidity. But still, what the effects of what was good and bad was of a high order, only they were not able to (inaudible) it. But here we have a science which is flourishing and which is prosperous from every point of view.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: One question for example would be this: if moral virtue of which we hear quite a bit from Aristotle, and the society where men of moral virtue are in control, (inaudible . . .) so it depends very much on the status of moral virtue. But we have not yet advanced to this point. The point to which we have advanced is that there is an almost infinite variety of human ends some hope for order shown by the fact of subordination of the arts procuring those ends. And this fact of subordination you see all the time. For example it was only recently that I observed that there are two kinds of waitresses, the ones who merely clean the tables, and the others who bring the food. It is quite reasonable because the one activity is higher than the other. One is merely preparatory for the other which leads to the fulfillment of your desire.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is a very sensible assertion. The word 'ideal' is not a Platonic word. But the more important point which you make is that the modern ideals are completely different from the Platonic ideals. A sign of this difference is that in the classical scheme, political economy plays no role. Not even the historian Thucydides, much admired because of his realism, has much to speak about this. That simply was not interesting. In modern times it is regarded as most important. So that has something to do with the status of food, in the wider sense of the term, and with comfortable self-preservation.

Reader: "It does not matter whether the ends are operational themselves or something other than operational."

Strauss: Something aside. Yes?

Reader: "as it was mentioned above."

Strauss: Yes. Now Aristotle states here explicitly that the hierarchic order exists both regarding the activity which has ends apart from the activity, and of those activities which have no ends, like riding. But there is a complication here. Bodily exercise, of which riding is a part, does not produce a work as shoemaking produces shoes. Yet bodily exercise is subservient to the medical art which has a worth outside the practice of medicine. And that is health. This is a point made by Thomas Aquinas. But let us go on.

Reader: "(Inaudible . . .)."

Strauss: This will be the good, and the best. The important thing is that this sentence begins with an 'if' and we must not forget that.

There must be ends for their own sake, Aristotle says here. Desire cannot be empty and useless altogether. Because desire, at least many of our desires, are natural. And what is natural is not empty and useless. That is Aristotle's assumption.

But of course, even granting that there must be ends for their own sake, this doesn't prove that there must be a single such end. I referred to health and wealth before. It is not sufficient to say that health is a greater good than wealth. For a poor man, the breadwinner of a large family, it may be better to earn money than to get medical care for which he cannot pay. An example which Plato used in the Republic, the fourth book, where he contrasts the posture of the sensible artisan, craftsman, who says I would rather be dead than be a burden on my family, with the rich man who invests all his efforts and money .

Now let us step back and look at the argument as a whole. The simple basis of Aristotle's pursuit in this book -- the simple beginning of the Ethics -- is that there is a variety of ends. Aristotle views that variety from the point of view of the variety of the arts, of the rational endeavors to achieve or procure those things. Now the arts show a hierarchy and therefore there is also a hierarchy of the ends. But is this sufficient? There are arts directed toward health and wealth. But what about arts productive of honor and pleasure? Would they not also have to be considered? Why does Aristotle not speak of that here? Perhaps we can say honor is given, if it is rightly given, for services, and there is an order of rank of the services, too. So would this not always come back to the point that there is a variety of ends? But also a hierarchy? As for pleasures, some of you have read (inaudible) and know there a distinction made by Socrates, the distinction between arts and (inaudible), for example cosmetics. Medicine is an art, but cosmetics, there is only the appearance. So this kind of consideration would also have to apply.

But let us go on.

Reader: "(Inaudible.)"

Strauss: Aristotle says, would it not be eminently helpful also with regard to life, i.e., in contradistinction to mere knowledge, to have a single end, a single target, so that we can decide in all cases which of the many ends has the priority? Would this not be a help? So for this purpose we would have to know first what the target is, and second, which kind of human knowledge or faculty is competent to know it, because if we don't have such a faculty or knowledge, then the explicit (inaudible) will always remain dubious. Let us assume for argument's sake that this best is known only to women's intuition, and then it would be very hard for the male part of the human race, and an (inaudible) would happen, but there would not be any difficulty because women's intuition implies that there should not be a reason. Aristotle has not in any way decided the question but prepares now for a decision by what he says.

Reader: "Inaudible."

Strauss: So Aristotle has given us an answer. Whether it is satisfactory or not, we do not yet know. To this question -- how we can know this best thing. Aristotle answers, as you see here, not the question of the best thing, but the question what knowledge or faculties are competent to know those? Here again, we start not from the side of the ends, but from the side of the arts or knowledges. He qualifies this statement as you will see. It could seem to be . . . this is a matter for the most architectonic art, and as such the political art, the political faculty, comes to sight. This word which he uses tries to preserve the ambiguity of the Greek.

Now why is the political art the most lordly and the most architectonic?

Reader: "Inaudible."

Strauss: Meaning the end of political science, the political art, political ability is the human good, and of no other arts. Let us try to understand Aristotle's argument. Today, for example, what does it mean that all arts serve the political art? Today physicists serving the government is one example. Aristotle gives two reasons: the political art determines which science ought to be, ought to exist in the city, and that seems to be incompatible with academic freedom. But the question arises whether there is not under certain circumstances whether some arts or sciences are not dangerous to human society. Aristotle takes this for granted.

And the second reason which he gives is that he takes the most respected of the arts and these are, according to him, the art of the general, the art of the manager of the household, and the art of public speech. Now these are highly respected arts and

all three for the practitioner admit that they are subject to the political art. If only because they are subject to the law, and the law is the work of the political art. Is there any difficulty here?

So when we think of it, that there might be arts or faculties which are not, according to their own confession, subject to the political art, but the most respected (inaudible). Let us assume for one moment that there is an art of circumstance, and this art will deny its being subject to the political art, (inaudible . . .), but among the right kind of people.

But for the time being, we have learned merely this -- that Aristotle asserts political art is the art which deals with the highest good. Whether this is unqualifiably true or only qualifiably true, (inaudible).

If we follow the drift of the argument, (inaudible) is this, that there is an art in existence called the political art. The very existence of that thing as the most architectonic power of man. This proves in a manner the existence of a single highest end. You remember that you have on the one side the good things. Now if the one side is tyrannical, culminating in the highest art, it is plausible to expect that there will be a similar pyramiderity on the side of the good things. So this proves that Aristotle is leading up to some expectation, and we must prove later on and see whether it sticks or not.

Now let us read the sequel.

Reader: "(Inaudible.)"

Strauss: City.

Reader: "(Inaudible.)"

Strauss: The inquiry strives for these things, goes after these things. Our enterprise is a kind of political science, with great qualifications. Corresponding (inaudible . . .) to what Socrates says when he says that he alone is the true politician in Athens. Now the true politician -- that is the same as not being a politician. Surely not an ordinary politician, and similarly political science which Aristotle exhibits in this work, --in a sense it is political science, but only in one sense. The differences we must come to see.

Now as for the word 'city' here, polis in Greek, let us translate it by city all the time and not by state nor by city-state, and if someone is compelled to (inaudible . . .). Otherwise we will not really understand what Aristotle is talking about.

The modern equivalent of what Aristotle or the Greeks understood altogether by the polis is the country and not the state. For example, also the emotional implications which country has do not belong to the state. The state is, as Nietzsche said, and President DeGaulle repeated, 'a cold monster.' Only DeGaulle meant it as a compliment, I think. But the country has nothing cold. That the polis has something to do with the state, I have no doubt about that. But we should nevertheless get some more precise understanding of this difference.

Now the single highest end is the human good. But why should it be the object of the political art? That could be questioned. We have here already an indication. Is the good, the best, the same for the individual and for the city? Perhaps that is not so. Then the highest art would not be (inaudible); Aristotle says they are not identical but there are so many qualifications. Here however Aristotle assumes that the end of the two are the same. To achieve and preserve the human good for the nation and the city is more noble and more divine than to do it for one man alone.

Now when Aristotle speaks here, he says a kind of politics, and previously he had spoken of politics. In the first case, he spoke of the art, procuring and preserving the highest good and that was the political art. But Aristotle speaks now of his work, of his political or moral teaching or whatever you call it. And that is not simply political. It is political in a sense. Do you understand this difference? The legislator -- to take the highest case. He elaborates a code for a given political community. He is politically active in the highest degree. But the teacher of legislators surrounded by ten or twelve young people who give promise of becoming legislators, he is not as a teacher politically active. He is a man in the classroom, in the study. Therefore in the Middle Ages they made a distinction between the practical sciences proper, economic and so on, and theoretical sciences. Sciences which clarify the practical sciences. That is I think what Aristotle has denied. Now he mentions here nation, in Greek ethos, and polis. What is the order of rank of nation and polis?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, I think that is correct, but it is very interesting that Thomas Aquinas says the nation is higher because it contains many cities. That is one of the few interesting deviations of Thomas.

Aristotle and other classical writers use frequently the expression, 'the cities and the nation.' In this connection this means almost the same as the Greeks and the barbarians.

I believe we have to leave it at this point.

Lecture X
Aristotle's Ethics

Strauss: Here is one paper and there are a few points. You say that Aristotle has here established that the main concern of politics is to secure the happiness of man. That is not quite correct. To what extent is it correct and to what extent is it incorrect? The precise point I think is this -- that Aristotle says on the one hand that the political art is the highest art and that the highest art is devoted to the highest human good and the highest human good is heaven. That one is entitled to conclude that it is the task of the political man, the statesman, the legislator, to make the citizens happy. But Aristotle does not say that. Aristotle says only that the task of the statesman is to make the citizens good citizens, good men, and doers of noble deeds. He does not explicitly say that the function of the statesman is to make the citizens happy.

Now there is one more point -- if Aristotle criticizes Plato on the grounds that the idea of the absolute good is of no use to the practitioner, I do not yet know of what use the definition of the end of politics given by Aristotle as being the good of man, an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue, can be for a political thinker or practitioner in search of the best regime for his polity. Now what could Aristotle reply?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Exactly. But Aristotle makes here only the point in the beginning that the statesman or politician or legislator has to do with the human good and not the good in the Platonic sense which you call the absolute good. And then he gives some illustrations -- what would be the use for a carpenter or a shoemaker to have the idea of the good if he wants to make good shoes. He obviously needs a kind of knowledge which does not include an idea of the good.

Student: (Inaudible.) The political thinker who wants the best regime for his polity may be very much able by adding some kind of absolute good or some kind of ideas of Plato which he would like to approximate, which he would like to work on.

Strauss: Yes, that is surely absent from Aristotle, one can say, although it is not very powerfully present in Plato -- the notion of a radical change -- this is absent from Aristotle. Aristotle thinks that no fundamental change in human conditions can reasonably be expected. Plato, by his notion of the idea of the good and by his Republic, and his radical statement that the (inaudible) must become kings seems to be much more radical in the modern sense of the term. In that you are perfectly correct, and therefore Plato has had a more direct influence on modern thinking than Aristotle.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, that could be, but as a matter of fact it did not lead to it in pre-modern times, but it was one can say a transformation of Plato's philosophy rather than of Aristotle's which led to the modern revolutionary movements.

Is Mr. S_____ here? Well, I deplore that. His statement is very challenging and I would like to have his help in discussing that. Very briefly, what Mr. S_____ suggests is that one should replace the Aristotelian duality of happiness and virtue by the duality of motivation and fulfillment, fulfillment taking the place of happiness, motivation taking the place of virtue. It would be worth our while to discuss that because there are obviously very different notions involved, very different positions, and it would be important to discuss that.

What is striking when one speaks of fulfillment and motivation, at first glance at least, is that there seems to be no provision made for goodness. A man may find his fulfillment in quite incredible and impossible things, and yet he is motivated toward it and he finds fulfillment in getting whatever he desires. I suppose that Mr. S_____ would not call fulfillment in bad things, and he would not speak of motivation if the motivation is the motivation toward bad things. But he has not given me any certainty by what he says about that.

The terms which he uses -- motivation and fulfillment -- while they are easily intelligible today because they are so commonly used, what is implied in these terms is by no means on the surface and would have to be brought out by a proper analysis.

He gives an example of what he understands by a properly motivated man, and he says 'could it be possible to be successfully motivated and still not be happy in Aristotle's sense?' In other words, he refers here to the difficulty we observed in Aristotle that a man may be a man of great excellence and yet of great misery.

'Experience seems to provide a positive answer to this question. In tense opposition to one's society can one use motivation of most overwhelming power. Consider for example a poet in (inaudible) for what he considers perfection is work, even though society scorns or actively opposes his efforts, who is willing to suffer and endure severe deprivation or even imprisonment in the name of his motivation. In such a case, although the individual is engaged in artificial or abstract endeavours, they achieve great fulfillment through their motivation, or else they would not put themselves in position in which they must inevitably suffer unhappiness. Happiness is therefore not the only possible goal for the motivation of civilized man.'

Now what shall we say about this argument? The fact that someone opposes his society and suffers for his opposition severely was not totally unknown to Aristotle. The simple proof of course is Socrates.

Socrates was condemned to death for his disagreement with the city of Athens. Was Socrates happy or unhappy by virtue of his condemnation? How would you answer this question? He was very unhappy. How could you prove it?

Student: Looking at the reasons he gives for not running away or not escaping exile, that actually his real obligation to Athens -- well you look both at the Apology and the (inaudible).

Strauss: That is what I had suggested, to look at the evidence. But the most important evidence is how he behaved on his last day. And when the man who described Socrates' last day says the man was happy -- because he knew that he had to die, but he didn't wish to spoil the last day for himself by moaning, and so they had a very exciting philosophic discussion. Whether he was sufficiently considerate of his nearest and dearest is a long question. But Aristotle hasn't said hitherto that you have to be extremely considerate.

But there is some other evidence regarding this fact, and since Mr. S___ speaks of poets -- now were poets persecuted in classical antiquity? There is a discussion of this subject, a very interesting one, in Aristophanes who presents Socrates in the *Clouds* and where Socrates is persecuted -- the old (inaudible) society is burning down, the think tank. I think that is a reasonable translation of the Greek word _____ and it is as folksy as think tank in present-day language, and then he presents in at least two places a persecution of a poet, in this case Euripides, and it appears that the poet Euripides is perfectly able to escape persecution because, being a poet, he has a much broader appeal than a fellow like Socrates does. This I mention only in passing.

There is another example by the way from the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus takes revenge on the wars of Penelope, there are two parallel figures -- one is a soothsayer and the other is a singer. Now the soothsayer he kills, and the other, the singer, he has compassion with. So the poets who exposed themselves to persecution apparently were less frequent in antiquity than in our age, and it would be important to see why this has changed.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, Mr. S___ would have to admit, I believe, that there are situations in which a fulfillment is impossible. Think of a highly motivated rational poet in the thirties or forties era, even before he could publish a single poem and perhaps even before he could finish it, the institution (I forgot the name) would have prevented any fulfillment. But what was your precise reason why fulfillment seems to be a better term than happiness?

Student: I didn't really think it was a better term, but it just seemed in a sense larger, I mean based on the idea of motivation and not virtue, it seemed to fit this case somewhat more, although

there was just one I thought of now offhand. (Inaudible) obviously was not happy; it seemed that he would be closer to fulfillment than happiness. I did n't want to set it up as better.

Strauss: But if you say that, he would at least be closer to fulfillment prior to the outbreak of the Trojan War. Then he was a highly respected and beloved ruler of the Trojans, and this suffered somewhat from the terrible blunder his (inaudible) made by bringing over heaven and all the consequences.

That is a very sensible question. How come that a young man like Mr. S___ and you apparently also is more attracted by the concept of fulfillment, motivation, than by happiness and virtue? I believe one would have to consider here Kant very much, where happiness simply takes a very secondary rule compared with fulfillment of duty, and therefore the only thing which counts in the estimation of a human being is whether he fulfills or shirks his duty. And the poet as presented by Mr. S___ is a man who fulfills his duty and disregards almost completely the harsh and unpleasant consequences. But there is of course this difficulty because for Kant there are universally valid rules of goodness, of moral action. And Mr. S___ does not have in mind the one moral law. I suppose what he thinks is rather that there is a variety of causes, let us assume good causes, a variety of good causes which differ from situation to situation and which have only something formal in common -- they are good causes. Another term used frequently now is project. One becomes an authentic human being (they no longer speak of good or bad) in contradistinction to an unauthentic by dedicating oneself to a project which originates entirely in oneself, and is therefore a full expression of this particular individual.

These are I believe some of the notions behind Mr. S___'s paper.

Now we have begun to read the second book of the second chapter of the Nicomachean Ethics.

Student: Wouldn't it eliminate a lot of misunderstanding when we speak of motivation and fulfillment if we took the words and made them a little less highfaloting and just spoke of want or desire . . .

Strauss: Sure, but why did Mr. S___ not choose these simple words?

Student: Because when Aristotle starts off, lots of people want these different things and then go on to analyzing it beyond that.

Strauss: But a desire can also mean a desire for (inaudible). Obviously what Mr. S___ has in mind when he speaks of motivation and fulfillment is not having a good dinner, but something higher.

But surely his examples show that.

Student: But the examples which he gives are akin to duty.

Strauss: The notion stems from that. I forgot perhaps one point. When Kant speaks of duty and duty to the moral law, he means by the law a law which I myself have imposed upon myself, and therefore the moral law is in a way my work and must originate in myself, otherwise it is not truly moral. Otherwise I obey either God or nature, and therewith shirk the responsibility for my action, while if it originates entirely in me, I have the full responsibility for my actions.

This Kantian moral doctrine is an important ingredient of what is now known as existentialism. For Kant it was clear that this law originating in the individual would always be the same in all cases, because man's innermost being is his reason, his rationality and what reason says is universally valid and necessary. And this is of course dropped by existentialism.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But that is not the point. When Aristotle speaks of law, in the first book, he takes here the same position as Plato. The legal and legitimate -- however you translate it -- is in a manner the just. Not simply the just, because there can be bad and evil laws. And in this case the just is different from the legal. Nevertheless, there is in law itself something good -- what people indicate when they speak of law and order -- the first requirement. This is recognized by Plato and Aristotle, but with a great qualification; law is not enough; it must be good law. And therefore if the legislator succeeds in making the citizens obedient to the law, that does not mean it makes him the doer of noble deeds, although the law is meant to do that, but in many cases the law does not keep its promise.

Now here in this chapter Aristotle began as you may remember -- "the present inquiry is not made for the sake of contemplation, not so that we know what virtue is, as Socrates did, but rather to serve the purpose that we become good, and we become good by acting in the proper manner, and not talking, discoursing, and so on."

Aristotle speaks first of how we become good. Now how is it possible to know how we should become good without having a previous awareness of what goodness is? How can you know how a man can become a carpenter if you don't know in the first place what a carpenter is? Or how a man can become a shepherd if you do not know what a shepherd is? Now Aristotle knows that of course, and he will take up the question of what virtue is in 1105, b29. But here in order to emphasize this point, that the most important thing is to become good, and not to engage in a theoretical speculation about what goodness is, he discusses first

how we become good. Of course he has a previous notion of what goodness is, but who has not? I mean at least in these olden times everyone knew what a gentleman was and so there was no -- there were different degrees of clarity, but in a general way there was agreement. And Aristotle takes this up then in the sequel and the first point he makes and the point at which we stopped in the last meeting -- that what he is going to say or what anyone might say on the subject of virtue cannot be exact, and the simplest explanation of this would be to say that there is no rule in this field without exception, whereas regarding triangles, circles and so on, there are rules without exception.

Student: Are the broad outlines as exact?

Strauss: The point which he wishes to make first is the inexactness of the whole, and that there are some things which are universally true here -- they can be presumed here. For example, that courage is a mean between cowardice and overboldness, that is surely universally valid. He doesn't tell you what you should do especially in a given situation. What might be cowardice or temerity in other situations might be the proper thing in a certain situation one can predict in advance.

I think we should go on to read in 1104a, line 5.

Reader: "And if this is true of the general discussion of ethics,
. . ."

Strauss: The general statement, the general definition, will have this inexactness.

Reader: "Still less is exact precision possible in dealing with particular cases."

Strauss: In other words, the statement about moral matters in general is not quite exact, no general rule without exception. But it is still more so regarding what is the particulars.

Reader: "For these come under no science or tradition, but the agents themselves have to consider what is suited to the circumstances on each occasion. This is the case of medicine, or of navigation."

Strauss: So the general thesis is, regarding the particulars, what is to be done under these and these circumstances, is still less susceptible of exactness. The case is the same as any other. One must play here by the ear, as you would say, and therefore we don't have the desire for exact knowledge here. He compares medicine and sailing, and these illustrations are not chosen haphazardly. They have in common one thing; they are arts which deal in dangers to life. It is highly hazardous to cross the sea, and medicine in the most interesting cases has to do with severe critical diseases. And this leads to interesting questions

like which men to save in a plague or a storm at sea? Noone can say in advance what might be reasonable in the circumstance. There are general rules; one ought to say the man most valuable to the community, and surely that is the general rule. But there are obvious difficulties. From Aristotle's point of view that would be the statesman. But there might be a situation in which a single physician would be available who would be more urgently needed by the community. And in addition there may be one of these men to be saved may be a very unwise man who happens to be the father of the (inaudible) or the physician; would it not be reasonable to save in the first place his own father rather than the statesman? It doesn't have to be his father; if he is the father of many children, that is an important consideration.

One can state the difficulty involved here by making a distinction. You can say in general what is the order of rank. Say from Aristotle's point of view that thinking, rationalizing, is higher than any practical activity. The activity of the statesman is higher than the activity of the garbage collector. But the highest or highest in rank is not the same as the most urgent. A simple practical example -- noone admires another human being for having successfully undergone appendectomy. I mean we can congratulate him if he survived, but we do not admire him, because it was not a virtuous action, an action of human excellence. It is perfectly true that in a given situation the appendectomy is the most urgent thing to do and not higher things. So the difference between rank and urgency explains ultimately why there is this uncertainty and everyone must ultimately decide on the basis of this situation on the spot what is to be preferred. Because in some cases it may truly be true that it is more important that he continues say with his study rather than his undergoing the operation. Such cases are thinkable; so Aristotle draws this conclusion in the next line.

Reader: "But although the discussion now proceeding is thus necessarily inexact, we must do our best to help it out."

Strauss: So, in other words, Aristotle will try to speak about universals although it is not a particularly promising thing to do compared with mathematics especially.

Reader: "First of all then we have to observe that such things are so constituted by nature that to be destroyed by excess and by deficiency."

Strauss: Things of importance to morality.

Reader: "As we see is the case with bodily health and strength for one is forced to explain what is invisible by means of visible illustrations; strength is destroyed both by excessive and by deficient exercising, and similarly health is destroyed both by too much and by too little, while they are produced, increased and preserved by suitable quantities."

Strauss: Suitable quantities -- emphasis on that. Not too much; not too little.

Reader: "The same therefore is true of moderation, courage, and the other virtues. The man who runs away from everything in fear and never endures anything becomes a coward; the man who fears nothing whatsoever and encounters everything becomes rash. Similarly, he who indulges in every pleasure and refrains from none turns out a profligate, and he who shuns all pleasure as boorish persons do becomes what may be called insensible. Thus moderation and courage are destroyed by excess and deficiency, preserved by the observance of the mean."

Strauss: Now taking the example of how virtue of the body is achieved, through gymnastics, he says there is a parallel in how the virtue of the soul is achieved. Virtues come into being by actions which are neither excessive nor deficient. In the case of gymnastics I think there is no doubt about this. We all admit it, but Aristotle says it is also true of the moral things and a simple example is a man who fears everything, even a fly, and acts this way and avoids anything which could be a nuisance, will become a coward without any doubt. And another man who faces any danger without any distinction will become rash. Yes?

Student: Aristotle seems to make the distinction in the case of bodily health which is not only preserved but also increased and produced by moderation, but he only says with respect to moderation and courage that it is preserved . . .

Strauss: Where is that? The man who flees from everything and fears it and doesn't undergo any danger and becomes a coward -- is that the passage you mean?

Student: Yes, and also the concluding passage -- in other words, it is either preserved or destroyed, moderation on the one hand, or excess or deficiency on the other, but nothing about its coming into being in a case where it does not exist at all.

Strauss: Destruction is of course the opposite to coming into being. You mean he says that it is preserved and not that it comes into being . . .

Student: He goes on to say that the fact that it is also generated .

Strauss: That is a transition to what he will discuss. The first point he makes is that the virtues and vices come into being by either following the mean or by following the excess or deficiency. And then he will say not only do the virtues come into being in that way, but they also consist in preferring the mean to the excess of the deficiency, and that is in a way prepared by this 'it is preserved' which you mentioned.

Student: In other words, the opposite of what destroys can also bring into being . . .

Strauss: Take the example of gymnastic exercises -- what brings into being bodily strength is the mean. What about the situation after he has acquired bodily strength? There will be a difference; Aristotle will make this clear in the sequel. But the principle remains the same; there is also there an excess to be avoided, and a deficiency to be avoided. So the moderate man will be able to eat more than the man who is becoming moderate, but he cannot eat everything all the time. And also he cannot fast all the time. But the question is, is there not a difference between the man who is becoming virtuous and the man who has become virtuous. Aristotle will take that up in the sequel.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But Aristotle doesn't speak here -- let me see, what does he say? Still, would there not be an excess of training even there? Perhaps not that specific training useful for this particular running, but there would be other trainings which he must avoid. The general answer to this will come later when Aristotle makes clear that virtue, while being a mean, is in another way an extreme. This is a statement which acquired some political importance in 1964, as some of you will know.

Student: I've heard about that.

Strauss: Yes. I'm not surprised. But let us first go on.

Reader: "But not only are the virtues generated and fostered on one hand . . . "

Strauss: But not only are the comings into beings and the increases and on the other hand the destructions out of the same thing and by the same thing -- namely by the means.

Reader: "But they will also find their exercise in the same actions . . . "

Strauss: But not only the coming into being, but also the actuality, the actual exercise after the coming into being has reached its end. And you are moderate, courageous, and for that matter well-trained in your body.

Reader: "This is clearly the case with the other more visible qualities, such as bodily strength, for strength is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, while also it is the strong man who will be able to do these things."

Strauss: To the highest degree; so in other words you become strong by taking much food and undergoing much pain, and yet once you have become strong, you are able to undergo, take in, much food,

and to undergo much toil.

Reader: "The same holds true with the virtues; we become moderate by abstaining from pleasures. At the same time we are best able to abstain from pleasures when we have become moderate."

Strauss: This is important; there is a difference between the apprentice and the master. The master can be clearly more moderate than the apprentice -- I mean the master of virtue.

Reader: "And so with courage, we become brave by training ourselves to despise and endure terror, and we shall be best able to endure terrors when we have become brave."

Strauss: Let us stop here one moment. What is true of the coming into being is true also of the full fledged activity. Full fledged activity is what Aristotle calls being at work. The being at work has not the character of a coming into being. We become good by doing what is in the mean; we are good by doing what is in the mean. But after we have become good, it is much easier to do the mean than it was while we were still in the process of becoming. That's the first difference between the becoming good and the being good.

Reader: "A sign of our dispositions is afforded by the pleasure or pain that accompanies our actions; a man is moderate if he abstains from bodily pleasures and finds this abstinence in itself enjoyable. He is profligate if he feels it irks him. He is brave if he faces danger with pleasure or without pain; cowardly if he does so without pain."

Strauss: So here he speaks again -- the difference between coming into being of goodness and the being good, or between acquiring the potency and the act. Who has acquired the disposition in (inaudible) derives less (inaudible) from the noble actions, and this is surely connected with the greater ease. The man who has acquired moderation, for him it is much easier to abstain from the wrong things, and therefore because there is no conflict involved, he can derive pleasure from doing the virtuous things.

You note here perhaps the qualification he makes when he speaks of courage. He says the man who undergoes hardships and is pleased with undergoing the hardships, he makes the qualifications 'or at least not pained by them.' That will be developed by Aristotle at some length in the discussion of courage where it is made clear that in the case of courage more than any other virtue that the enjoyment of one's virtue is this great because what it means is to face death and mutilation and this is not as enjoyable as the acts of the other virtues can be. In my opinion, the reason why Aristotle begins his discussion of the virtues with courage -- in other words, he ascends from the least highest virtue to the highest, the highest sphere being justice as we will see later.

Student: Doesn't it seem more likely that a manly man might enjoy the thrill more than he would enjoy abstaining from pleasures?

Strauss: That is not Aristotle's view, because Aristotle as he makes clear there says that the truly courageous man is not a bully or a hired murderer, but a man who loses very much by going to war and by dying. And therefore because he has so much to lose, and he's speaking not so much of wealth and so on, but a nice family, the virtues he practice at home, and therefore it is particularly hard for him to lose his wife, and there is no such danger involved in doing the acts of the other virtues.

Student: (Inaudible . . .) and the hierarchy of the virtues from that point of view would seem to be a hierarchy of pleasures, but from another point of view it would also seem to be a hierarchy with respect to intellectual qualities necessary for performing the virtues. Is there a correspondence between the hierarchy of pleasures and intellectual qualities?

Strauss: Perhaps so, but in the case of justice, at least the more sophisticated forms in which man can practice justice, say as judges, requires more sophistication than to decide the question of what to do right here in the case of the other virtues. As regards this relation of the virtues and pleasures, you must not forget the statement which we had in Book I, that there is an ultimate harmony with the noble and the pleasant. From Aristotle's point of view, this ultimate harmony is more obvious in the case of the contemplative life than in the case of the practical life, and therefore there will be necessarily an ascent towards the philosophic life.

Now let us read the sequel where he makes this point somewhat clearer.

Reader: "In fact, pleasures and pains are the things with which moral virtue are concerned, for pleasures cause us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from noble actions. Hence, the importance as Plato points out of having been definitely trained from childhood to like and dislike the proper things. This is what good education means."

Strauss: Now here Aristotle draws a conclusion from what he had said in the preceding section. Moral virtue has to do with pleasure and pain, and that would distinguish it from the intellectual virtues which would be accompanied by pleasures and pains, but their theme is not pleasure or pain. Now moral virtue has to do with pleasure and pain, that is to say with resisting the allurements of pleasure and pain. We must resist the allurements of pleasure in such a way that we derive pleasure from the very resistance, and only when we have reached this stage are we virtuous.

You remember in an earlier statement which was hard to follow, in 1099a, 7-31, when Aristotle spoke of the things which are by nature pleasant, and by which he did not mean the ordinary sensual pleasures. These pleasures accompanying the acts of virtue

are by nature pleasant because they are related to man's perfection, to his nature in its fullest perfection. But this thought is not difficult to follow I suppose. He discusses first how virtue and vice come into being, and the ultimate conclusion is that virtue and vice, or the study of virtue and vice, has to do primarily with pleasure and pain, but pleasure and pain as something to be resisted or controlled.

Student: This would imply that there are two sorts of pleasures, the first pleasures which have to be resisted, but doesn't that seem to overlook the fact that there is something very natural about the first pleasures too and that would seem almost ineradicable . . .

Strauss: Sure, but . . . yes?

Student: One could be as ascetic as one likes, but food will always taste good.

Strauss: Especially if you are hungry . . . It would be very harsh and inhuman to deny that. But the reason is this -- you make a distinction I suppose between reasonable or moderate eating and immoderate. There are kinds of eating foods which are self-punitive. You get nausea and all kinds of troubles if you eat these things. So we must make a distinction between the pleasures which are followed or not followed by immediate pain which every sensible man would avoid, and the pleasures which are all right. In other words, pleasures are also the unreasonable pleasures as well as the reasonable ones. So the distinction between preferable pleasures and non-preferable does not stem from pleasure but comes from a higher sphere, say from reason -- that is at least Aristotle's view.

The hedonist, the man who said that the good is identical with the pleasure, tried to find a distinction within the spheres of pleasures themselves. Pleasures followed by pain are less pleasures than pleasures not followed by pain. And here they claim they did not have to introduce a higher principle. Lasting pleasures are to be preferred to short-lived pleasures. Pure pleasures, pleasures without the (inaudible) of pain, are to be preferred to pleasures which have in themselves an admixture of pain. These various things were tried by both predecessors, contemporaries, and successors of Aristotle. But Aristotle as well as Plato said that pleasure cannot derive from the principle of human action and the reason is stated as follows. After all, the brutes too have pleasures -- if you observe ants, how they enjoy getting their food, you see that they have pleasures and also pains, someone can mistreat them and so on, let them be hungry. But men and women have different pleasures. A man and a woman have pleasure for gold, but a donkey wouldn't give a damn for large amounts of gold. Hay or some other things, and men are not particularly pleased if they are given hay.

So when we speak of pleasure and pain, we mean of course pleasure and pain which are pleasures and pains for human beings, and not

pleasures and pains for donkeys. Now in other words, when we speak of pleasure and pain we make a tacit assumption and the philosopher is not supposed to make merely tacit assumptions but to make them explicit. An explicit assumption is then to repeat that the pleasures and pains are human pleasures and pains. But then in order to find out what the human pleasures and pains are, you have to consider man's human nature, and then you reach the conclusion that man is an animal that possesses discourse or reason, and therefore this will affect the human pleasures. And it will affect them in particular in this way -- the pleasures which are the highest degree to man natural are those which derive from his resisting the mere desires of pleasure. That is the point which Aristotle makes. Aristotle doesn't deny that food and drink is pleasant, or that you feel guilty eating pleasing food rather than unpleasing food. That is not the point. In this sphere, human excellence has no place. In other words, Aristotle implies that we cannot admire a man for the fact that he eats all the time very well. In ordinary language, we speak today of a gourmet as a kind of virtue. We must have a particularly trained taste, and there is nothing wrong, but one could also say that it is nothing grand. I mean you would not vote for a presidential candidate on the grounds that he has an excellently trained palate. So it is a kind of nice social ornament to have this quality and you can be sure when you are invited to get a good meal, but you wouldn't call such a man an excellent human being. You would say he is a gourmet.

Student: I was thinking here when you were giving the example of a well-trained palate, and I couldn't help but thinking about the reason the pure and healthy city goes out of existence because there are no relishes, so it seems that a well-trained palate in the case of Plato, at least of what Plato wrote, is very important. In Aristotle we don't see the pure and healthy city going out of existence for that reason. It has something to do not with the palate but with certain other pleasures, sexual pleasures, and that seems to be the root of the city rather than the well-trained palate.

Strauss: Not pleasures for Aristotle, but procreation, and that procreation is accompanied you know from the literature by (inaudible), but that doesn't explain the purpose of procreation.

Student: But it seems to me that Aristotle is trying to play down the body from the point of view of the body -- an example we gave earlier of the runner. He no longer wants to become a fast runner, but a faster runner, and after he becomes a faster runner, he becomes still faster. . .

Strauss: Sure, that Aristotle knows.

Student: I would expect he does, but on the basis . . .

Strauss: But he has to consider the whole, in proportions, even if man concentrates on running and forgets everything else, then he may win an Olympic race, but if he does this literally, he will

neglect other potentialities which he may have. And if he does not have them that is also a defect, and similarly the man who specializes in the pleasures of the palate and becomes the first gourmet of the whole country, there is a disorder there, an (inaudible) of one thing and an atrophy of more important things.

Student: The disorder wouldn't in itself be an objection.

Strauss: It would be an objection; it doesn't mean that this man should be criminally persecuted. It is a defect, and when you think of such a man in various relations, or just speak about him, in general moral discussions, you know this fact. His dinners are wonderful but he is an unbearable bore.

Another Student: You said that pleasures which came from moral virtue are by nature pleasurable. I'm confused now by what we mean by nature regarding intellectual virtues.

Strauss: It is unfortunate, although inevitable, but unfortunate, that we students of Aristotle think all the time of the end of this work, either because we have read it before or because someone else has told us, and the end is then the contemplative (inaudible). And when the sun shines, the moon is invisible, and also the particular beauties, colors and what have you, are due to the shining of the moon, must be abandoned. But we must however make this effort, and the effort is not too difficult, to see the things as they appear before philosophy has (inaudible). That is at least the levelon which Aristotle speaks up to almost the end of the book. And within this horizon he says, and I believe he means this also ultimately, that the things by nature good for man are above all pleasures which have to do with the specifically human perfection. So the pleasures deriving from food and so on do not belong to those things by nature pleasant in an emphatic sense. It does not mean that they are not pleasant in their way. The distinction of man, the excellence of man, is not to be found in this sphere.

I hope you all understand that what I said about the gourmet applies equally to a specialist in sexual pleasures, although this is a (inaudible) sphere, and it is only from a sense of propriety that I did not make this . . .

Student: It would seem though in a strange sort of way that when you speak of the gourmet or any of these specialists as in a way deformed, because they have maximized only one potentiality and let other things go by the wayside. In a way you could look at the philosopher in the same way. He has actualized his (inaudible), nevertheless he seems deformed. We know Socrates was very strong but we also know he wasn't particularly handsome.

Strauss: And that is a serious point, and why is it so serious? (Inaudible), and secondly because there is a presumption that the ugliness of the body indicates an ugliness of the soul. And therefore once a physiognomy (inaudible) and Socrates has a very bad character underneath, and so it is said, yes, that's true, but I correct myself.

But to come to another example to illustrate the point -- a man with ears, they may be bigger ears and smaller ears, and some nice and not nice, there are all kinds of possibilities there, not as Aristotle himself observes, if the ear becomes so very big, a yard long, then it would no longer fulfill the function of an ear, i.e., it would no longer be an ear.

Now similarly, a man who specializes in some of these more or less far-fetched specialties, he is like a man with an overgrown ear or overgrown nose, and who can no longer fulfill his function as a human being.

Student: It seems like what we said before that Aristotle has a single hierarchy of virtues and vices which apply to all men and is a standard of judgment for all men, and I wondered whether Plato in his myth in the Republic regarding three kinds of men doesn't in some way not agree with Aristotle on that point?

Strauss: You mean in the (inaudible)?

Student: Well, earlier, where there are men of gold and silver and bronze and iron.

Strauss: But which are these three classes of men in Plato? The first he calls the moneymaking men; the second are the soldiers; and the third highest are the rulers, the wise men. Now this whole thing in the Republic is based on a premise, the premise namely, no private property. This is a premise which Aristotle rejects, and therefore you have to reformulate it in order to bring out its Aristotelian parallel. And then there would be the wise men, the philosophers, at the top, the most experienced and practical statesmen, and your chief support, and in a way the support of the polis, the city, would be the gentlemen possessing private property and being also the core of the military force, and then the lower, the craftsmen, farmer, and peasant. There is a difference, but it is a difference regarding the status of private property versus communism.

Student: But that's what I'm not so sure about it. It does seem that Plato more than Aristotle (inaudible) that these men have different natures.

Strauss: Naturally, otherwise it wouldn't be just. Aristotle would fully agree, but Aristotle would say it is very difficult to build up a society according to nature because there are many borderline cases as Plato makes clear in the Republic by the natural number. This whole system would work if we could be sure that a good couple, husband and wife, would produce good children. That is of course what we all expect, but then among the children a very unpleasant great granduncle suddenly makes his appearance to the great (inaudible) of the parents, and so if there were a natural number which would get us exactly which human couple would be sure to produce for all infinity excellent offspring,

it would be fine, but the natural number is so complicated that no one has been able to say what it is. And therefore we have to leave it at not goodness or badness but at the presumption of goodness or badness. Everyone who has had any legal training has heard that legal presumptions are as good as facts in a legal context. We presume therefore that decent people will have decent offspring. Think how legal cases were decided in former cases, and when the culprit was known to be the son of decent parents, he was treated better than if his parents were known to be not nice people.

Now this whole sphere is in a radical reversal and I don't have to develop it, but generally speaking . . . /the tape was changed at this point/ . . . you can't expect exactness in these matters; there is always a black sheep around. This doesn't make the family a black family because the son may be sent to Sicily or any other out of the way place, not to say Australia.

So in other words there is a certain degree of hypocrisy, to state it harshly. It is inevitable in these matters, but the hypocrisy is nevertheless, as a French proverb says, a bow which vice makes to virtue, and it is not simply to be rejected from a very narrow concern with sincerity at all costs, because that also destroys quite a few charms and necessities of society.

Student: It still seems to be the case that theoretically if the nuptial number could ever work out, that Plato does think it is better to believe that men do have different natures . . .

Strauss: (Inaudible) asserts this in the strongest form. There is no question that this notion of what Xenophon calls good natures as distinguished from bad natures has nothing to do with what we call good and bad natures, meaning an inclination to thoughtful life and the absence of it. These distinctions exist. I would say even today in the age where some people believe that IQ's are known to distinguish between preferable and less preferable students, it is recognized. But what they mean is something more, something richer.

Student: But there is a difference between Aristotle's notion of a disposition to goodness or badness and Plato's notion of truly different kinds.

Strauss: Disposition as we have come across here is acquired and to that extent not natural. But there is a difference of which he has not spoken yet, because he cannot speak of all things at the same time. There is a difference between men who have a natural aptitude, say courage or magnanimity, and men who lack that natural aptitude, who may still be able to acquire it but with much greater difficulty. He speaks of it later on.

Student: Plato would say that some men can acquire different virtues, for instance a craftsman.

Strauss: You must make a distinction. The actual craftsman may be a man compelled by unfortunate circumstances to have become a craftsman, but would have become a first-rate mathematician. That happens; and vice versa. So there are -- the social hierarchy is not identical with the natural hierarchy.

Student: But in Plato it is -- I mean the ideal case.

Strauss: The Republic is based on the impossible assumption that there can be a society which is perfectly just in which the natural hierarchy is identical with the actual hierarchy. But I think the Republic properly understood shows that this is an impossible assumption, and one of the signs is the nuptial number. It is not enough to have it now for one moment of the founding act, but you want to have it for all the future, for all generations, and that means that the upper-stratum parents generate upper-stratum children, and the lower-stratum parents generate lower-stratum children. This doesn't function, and therefore you have a choice -- either you say we will be very strict and just. If a boy or girl will be born in the lower classes, he or she will be sent up immediately as soon as his or her superiority is found out, to the higher classes. Then there will be a lot of difficulty because in the lower classes they know their parents, and then think of this boy of two years who shows awaiting signs of superiority will be drawn away from his mother and what mental suffering you impose on that boy and mother and father. So it will amount in practice to a caste system, i.e., the presumption that the upper-class offspring will be upper-class and the lower-class offspring will be lower-class. Either you have constant upheaval and terrible human suffering, or you will be satisfied with the (inaudible) difference between the natural hierarchy and the actual hierarchy. That is exactly what Plato wants to show in the Republic -- why the problem of justice does not permit (inaudible), and when he says somewhere (I think it is in Book IV) where Plato says something to the effect that where in the city which we have founded we will find justice and injustice. Shorey, a well-known commentator and translator of Plato, says of course there is no injustice in Plato's Republic. Well, he knows better what Socrates meant -- of course, there will be injustice because no human institutions can be perfectly just because, if I may use now modern language, the injustice which nature is (inaudible) by producing beings of different kinds and by not supplying us with simple rules so we can be sure the offspring of good parents will be good, this can never be corrected by man. We will hope now that some discoveries in genetics will make it possible for the future.

Is this not so? We will discuss it as soon as it has been completed. Otherwise we will fall into that mistake which some scientists fell in 1828 when a German chemist produced uric acid in a test tube, and there was great excitement -- now the

problem of life has been solved, and we have heard it many times since, and let us wait until they make a human being or a dog in a test tube and then we will say yes.

Now Aristotle will go on here in the sequel, to make it quite clear why virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain, and he dwells on it for quite some time.

Student: This passage here seems to be implying that they do what they do because (inaudible . . .). Do you actually believe that?

Strauss: Not quite; that is not quite his opinion. But men prefer what they prefer for a variety of reasons. And there is a general tripartition made by Aristotle -- the noble, the useful, and the pleasant. For example, people prefer the useful, which is not such a pleasant thing -- a tooth extraction is not pleasant but it may be useful. But it also has nothing intrinsically noble. On the other hand, the highest consideration is that of the noble, what is intrinsically preferable. What Aristotle claims is, while at first glance there seems to be a clear cleavage not to say of opposition between the noble and the pleasant. Close analysis shows that there is no such opposition, even a cleavage, because they are pleasures deriving from resisting the low-class pleasures and undergoing the low-class pain. That is somewhat complicated but not far-fetched, because something of this kind we all know I think from our own experiences.

Lecture XI

Aristotle's Ethics

Strauss: Now we might perhaps reflect before we begin on the difficulty of Aristotle's Ethics as a whole. Now Aristotle has this notion that there is an end of man, and according to him all beings have an end, not only plants and animals, but also inanimate things insofar as the heavy things tend toward the center of the earth.

Now this notion of ends, natural ends, is very plausible if we think of the clear case of an acorn leading to an oak, and then the oak again producing acorns leading to other oaks. But if we take on the other hand a human embryo as the beginning corresponding to the oak leading up to the perfect gentleman, this is not as simple as the acorn's way to the oak. We are therefore inclined to say that man's end is not imposed on him by nature, as the end of the acorn is imposed. But the end of man is freely chosen in the sense of freely posited. Man could as well have imposed on himself other ends, and we see as a matter of fact different human beings choosing different ends, and more generally, different epochs and cultures choosing different ends.

There is no definite result of the development beginning with the fertilization of the human egg, and this seems to be the unique character of man -- freedom not to have by nature an end.

Now Aristotle recognizes the uniqueness of man, in particular the passage of his work on the soul where he says that the soul is in a manner all things and he means by that the human soul. It would not make sense in Aristotle's view of any other soul. Man and only man is a microcosm. So Aristotle knows the uniqueness of man and this whole reasoning regarding man's end is based on this awareness.

Now how does Aristotle argue in the Ethics as we have read it hitherto? In the passage in 1097b, 25, and thereabouts, Aristotle starts with the question, is there a work of man. In the case of the arts, we see each peculiar art has a peculiar end. And the same is true also of the parts of the human body -- the work of the eyes, the ears, and so on. And then he draws from this the conclusion in 1098, 16-17, the conclusion being that the human good is the excellent activity of the soul, meaning of course of the human soul.

Now what Aristotle presupposes here is that man is the rational animal, and therefore the activity of reason, the excellent activity of reason, is the end of man, but could one not say the same of any human work, for example of the shoemaker, for there is no human work, however low it is, which does not presuppose reason. Even collecting garbage is something which presupposes a minimum of reason.

But precisely this fact shows that there is a higher (inaudible) of works which man can do. Concretely, the bridle maker that serves the art of the horseman, the art of the horseman serves the art of war, and the art of war serves the political state. So the political art is then the architectonic art, and this fact proves that there is a single human end in spite of the variety of ends, insofar as other ends serve one highest end.

But here of course questions arise. Is poetry too subject to the political art? If it is, censorship would be perfectly all right. And Plato and Aristotle did not refrain, did not hesitate, to accept this conclusion. As you know from Books 2 and 3 of the Republic and as you might know from Book 8 of the Politics. Yet there is one activity which from Plato's and Aristotle's point of view cannot be subject to the political art, and that is philosophy. This is proven by the very fact which seems to refute it, namely the notion of the philosopher-king. The philosophers must be politically active; they must be kings only if they are the rulers. That is to say the philosophers are never rightfully subject to politics or to the political art. Therefore, from Plato and Aristotle's point of view, poetry would acquire immunity from this subjection to the extent to which it is akin to philosophy. Poetry as wisdom, as a kind of wisdom, could conceivably be free from the political art subjection, and some poets from earlier times, such as Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare, would seem to have agreed with this view of poetry. Today of course it is very unpopular.

Now this much to remind us of the overall context. Now for the context in Book 2. Aristotle has made clear that moral or ethical virtue arises through habituation by doing the just and noble things, we become just and noble. Yet there is a difference between the apprentices and the masters. Between those who are in the stage of becoming good and those who are already good. Aristotle turns to a more precise discussion of how we become good for the reason indicated in 1103b, 27. Namely, the purpose of our investigation is not to know what virtue is, but to become good, and therefore let us see how we become good. Then he finds out that by doing the just and noble things, we become just and noble -- he must therefore raise the question, what is the difference here between the apprentice and the master, between the man becoming good and the man who is good, and the first answer is, it is much easier to do the noble and just things for the master than for the apprentice. But connected with it is it is much more pleasant for the master than for the apprentice. The apprentice has to overcome himself all the time, whereas the master has acquired this mastery.

In the passage which we read last, Aristotle suggests this. Moral virtue has to do with pleasure and pain, meaning with resisting the allurements of pleasure and the opposite regarding

pain. But by resisting the allurements of pleasure we acquire the habit, by virtue of which we derive pleasure from this very resistance, and when we do that, we have reached the end of this process.

So the theme becomes now, as I repeated already, that moral virtue has to do with pleasure and pain. And this theme he develops in the sequel, 1104b, 13.

Reader: "Again, if the virtues have to do with actions and emotions, and every emotion or action is attended with pleasure or pain, this too shows that virtue has to do with pleasure and pain, and another indication is the fact that pain is the medium of punishment, for punishment is a sort of medicine. It is the nature of medicine to work by means of opposites."

Strauss: So here he gives a second reason why virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain. This is confirmed by how we treat vicious actions. We treat them by inflicting pain. Punishment is like a medicine. Of course, like a medicine; otherwise vice would be the same as illness, which Aristotle never admits and he discusses that at some length in the third book. I do not know whether some of you have read Samuel Butler's Oedophon, where Butler experiments with the opposite view -- diseases are crimes, and crimes are diseases. The criminals are treated by physicians of the soul, and the bodily sick are treated by judges.

Today we have a position which has as much to do with that satirized by Butler, rather than with what Aristotle says.

Now the third point which he makes in the sequel . . .

Reader: "Again, as we said before, every form or disposition of the soul realizes its nature, in relation to and dealing with those things by which it is its nature to be corrupted or improved. But men are corrupted through pleasures and pains, that is either by pursuing or avoiding the wrong pleasures or by pursuing and avoiding them at the wrong time, wrong manner, or in one of the other wrong ways under which errors of conduct can be logically classified."

Strauss: Logically is of course an entirely redundant addition of the editor. What other classification does he mean? Alphabetical or what?

So here he gives the third reason -- the nature of virtue and vice is related to such things and is concerned with such things as are the natural causes of the coming into being of virtue and vice. The nature of virtue and vice is distinguished from the coming into being of virtue and vice, but virtue and vice come into being by the proper or improper pursuit of pleasure and

avoidance of pain.

To make this quite clear (because it is somewhat complicatedly expressed by the author), we become good or bad by pursuing pleasure or pain in the right or in the wrong way. But the coming into being throws an important light on the result of that genetic process, on the nature of virtue and vice. Is this clear?

Reader: "This is why some thinkers define the virtues as states of impassivity, tranquility, though they make a mistake in using these terms simply, without adding "in the right," or "in the wrong manner, or "at the right" or "at the wrong time" and the other qualifications."

Strauss: So this is a corollary to what Aristotle said before. Virtue could lead to the conclusion which some people have thought, that virtue is freedom from passions, apathy. But Aristotle says virtue is not simply freedom from affections, but freedom from affections in the right kind of circumstance. Anger -- to overcome one's anger is by no means universally a good action because there are situations in which we should become angry. And the same applies to the other passions as well. Therefore, this is not a new argument but a corollary to number 4.

Reader: "Therefore, moral virtue is held to be the quality of acting in the best way in realtions to pleasures and pains, and vice the opposite. But the following considerations also will give us further light on the same point."

Strauss: That is a new argument, a fourth reason why virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains.

Reader: "There are three things that are the motives of choice, and three that are the motives of avoidance, namely the noble, the expedient, and the pleasant, and their opposites, the base, the harmful, and the painful. Now in respect of all these, the good men, those right, and the bad, those wrong, but especially in respect of pleasure, for pleasure is common to man with the lower animals, and also it is a concomitant of all the objects of choice, since both the noble and the expedient appear pleasant."

Strauss: Now here is a general statement on the three highest classes of things preferred. They are called here noble, the useful or expedient, and the pleasant. This underlines the division used in Aristotle's Rhetoric where he devotes a chapter to each of the three kinds of things. The last book of the Rhetoric. You could do worse than reading these three chapters.

Aristotle tries to show again why virtue has to do with the pleasures and pains, although there are three kinds of pleasurable things, not only the the pleasnat and painful, but also the noble

and the base, and the useful and harmful. For the pleasant is the most universal of these things. In the first place, all living beings are concerned with pleasure and pain, whereas only man is concerned in addition with the useful and the noble, and secondly, even the noble and the useful come to sight as pleasant, whereas not everything pleasant comes to sight as noble or useful. So pleasure is the most universal of the three considerations. Most universal among all the species of beings, and among the species of things preferred or desired by man.

Reader: "Again, the susceptibility to pleasure has grown up with all of us from the cradle; hence this feeling is hard to eradicate, ingrained in the fabric of our lives. Again pleasure and pain are also the standard by which we all, in a greater or lesser degree, regulate our action. On this account, therefore, pleasure and pain are necessarily our whole concern since to feel pleasure or pain, rightly or wrongly, has no small effect on conduct."

Strauss: Here the translation is misleading. There is only a single argument; the second again doesn't occur in the original. This is the fifth reason given by him.

We sense pleasure and pain from the moment of our birth, and this is not simply identical with the fact that pain is common to all animals, and therefore also to man before he has shown in any way his peculiarly human qualities, I mean of the moment of his birth.

The point which he makes here is this -- because we begin our lives guided by pleasure and pain alone, this forms us throughout our lives, and the pleasures and pains we have enjoyed or avoided from earliest childhood on. Therefore, this is another reason why the moral philosopher must pay attention to pleasure and pain. So that is the sixth reason.

Reader: "It is harder to fight against pleasure than against anger, as Heraclitus says, . . . "

Strauss: Heraclitus had said, it is hard to fight against anger or spiritedness. This must be understood accordingly. And now Aristotle correcting Heraclitus. Heraclitus forgot that it is still harder to fight against pleasure than it is anger or spiritedness.

Reader: "But virtue and honor are constantly dealing with what is harder. The harder the task, the better its success."

Strauss: So since it is so hard to control pleasure, controlling pleasure belongs to this kind of thing, the kind of thing to which all arts and virtues belong. All arts and virtues have to do with overcoming of difficulties, with what we can do without difficulty, for example, knocking an apple from a tree -- there

is no art. But whenever there is a difficulty to overcome, we need either an art or a virtue. And therefore the fact that in moral and political philosophy we have to deal with pleasure and pain is another confirmation of this.

Aristotle implies here that pleasure-pain rather than spiritedness to use a platonic interpretation is the fundamental phenomenon. The spiritedness, as Plato calls in the Republic the most (inaudible) we get angry if we do not get what we desire. The desire is first, and if the desire is thwarted, then anger.

Reader: "For this reason also therefore pleasure and pain are necessarily the whole concern both of virtue and political science, since he who comports himself to them rightly will be good, and he who does so wrongly will be bad."

Strauss: So virtue and the political (inaudible), not all arts, deal with pleasures and pains.

Reader: "We may then take it as established that virtue has to do with pleasures and pains, that the actions which produce it are those which increase it and also, if differently performed, destroy it. The actions from which it was produced are also those in which it is exercised."

Strauss: Now this is a summary of the section which began at 1104b, 3. A sign of the habits as distinguished from the coming into being are the pleasures and pains which accompany them or arise together with them.

Now this chapter we have now concluded and let us turn to the sequel.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is a qualification you make in the spirit of Aristotle, but still more generally stated, the noble and the useful appear to be pleasant. And you add, only for a certain calibre of man, but Aristotle says still, they appear pleasant, don't they? And therefore the opposite is not true -- the pleasant does not appear useful, i.e., every pleasant does not appear to be useful; every pleasure does not appear to be noble.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But to limit ourselves to the simple and clear case to which you referred -- for the noble character these hard things would nevertheless be pleasant, so Aristotle is right. The inverse is not true, and this means the consideration of pleasure and pain is the broadest of all considerations. It does not mean that it is the authoritative consideration. For as we will soon hear straight from Aristotle's mouth, if we have not already heard it before, what is important is not to feel pleasure and pain, that doesn't require any effort. Right

posture towards pleasure and pain -- that this right posture is then pleasant for those who have acquired mastery; it is indeed true. But the primary consideration is that it is a mastery, is an attitude or posture toward pleasures and pains, and not that it is also in itself given a certain stage of normal development. Are you satisfied or not?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Another Student: At the beginning of your lecture, you discussed (inaudible) and Aristotle's statement of the habits that one learns as a child (inaudible) . . .

Strauss: The simplest answer would be to say that Aristotle will discuss the question of freedom in Book 3. But Aristotle ascribes to a man both freedom and this kind of determination coming from upbringing -- both. In other words, a man who has acquired the habit of getting drunk cannot get rid of that; that does not mean that he doesn't have freedom shown by the fact that if this man who has acquired the habit of drinking runs over a man with his car, he will be punished for drunken driving, and no one will say he will be excused because he is an habitual drunkard. That is the way in which Aristotle argues. The practice of legislation is as important a clue for Aristotle finding out what good and bad is or to think about it than so-called abstract considerations. Does it not make sense?

Student: But there is that emphasis on a habit which men learn in youth . . .

Strauss: But it's not true. Are men not shaped to a considerable extent by their upbringing -- not completely, because you find black sheep in the best of families. So you have two brothers who have the same upbringing, one is good and one is bad -- one had a better nature than the other; that could very well be. It could also be a right or wrong use of freedom; it's a long question. We are not yet prepared for that. But the only thing I can say in defense of Aristotle, if that defense is necessary, is that no one denies the importance of upbringing for the character we finally have. Whether it is not possible for a human being to become a good man if he had the very worst of upbringings. Aristotle doesn't speak about it, but I think he implies it. But one would have to have some other influences perhaps -- to see other people and how they live, and be more attracted by that than by the conduct (inaudible). But primarily we do not have the ability to set our ultimate goals by ourselves, but they are imposed on us by our society.

So then we go on in 1105a, 17.

Reader: "A difficulty may however be raised as to what we mean by saying that in order to become just, men must do just actions.

And in order to become moderate, they must do moderate actions. For if they do just and moderate actions, they are just and moderate already. Just as if they spell correctly or play a tune, they are grammarians or musicians."

Strauss: This is clear, this difficulty. Must one already be a just man in order to do just actions, and this is a difficulty which has not been discussed by Aristotle in this form, but it is very necessary to discuss it.

Reader: "But perhaps this is not the case even with the arts. It is possible to spell a word correctly by chance or because someone else prompts you, but hence you will be a grammarian only if you spell correctly in the grammarian's way, that is, in virtue of the grammarian's knowledge which you yourself possess."

Strauss: According to the grammatical knowledge in him. Now let us stop here -- the difficulty first regarding the arts. There is a difference between the apprentice who spells correctly but who does not have the principle of correct spelling in himself. Once he has acquired the principle of right spelling, then it is in him, and he will do not only the grammatically correct way, but he will do them also in a grammatical way, which means the way in which a Noah of the grammatical arts would do. Is this clear? The same applies to the shoemaker and to any other artist.

So this is fairly simple in the case of the arts, but how is it in the case of the virtues which he discusses in the sequel.

Reader: "And moreover the case of the arts is not really analogous to that of the virtues. Works of art have their merit in themselves, so that it is enough that they are produced having a certain quality of their own. But acts done in conformity with the virtues are not done justly or moderately if they themselves are of a certain sort, but only if the agent also is in a certain state when he does them. First, he must act with knowledge; second, he must choose the act, this for its own sake, and third, the act must spring from a fixed and permanent disposition of character. For the possession of an art, none of these conditions is included except the mere qualification of knowledge, but for possession of the virtues, knowledge is of little or no avail whereas the other conditions, so far as being of little moment, are all important, inasmuch as virtue results from the repeated performance of moderate actions."

Strauss: So knowing is of decisive importance in the arts. We have to know how to spell, and if you know how to spell completely, you are a good speller, a practitioner of the art of letters. But knowing is not of decisive importance in the virtues. In the case of the virtues it is much more important that the right actions be performed in the right spirit, that is to say, for their own sake. Now why is this different in the arts? A good carpenter may be a man who sleeps or is drunk most of the time.

He does his work only in order to get money for buying whiskey. But this does not necessarily detract from his being a first-rate carpenter. The good man as distinguished from the good carpenter must do the right things for their own sake, be dedicated to them, and enjoy doing them; whereas this good carpenter may not enjoy it at all. He may enjoy only the whiskey. But he can nevertheless be a very competent carpenter. This is possible.

So there is a certain parallelism of the arts as we have seen, but there are infinitely important radical differences. We must perhaps consider for one moment the relation of the philosopher on one hand to the artisan on the one hand and to the morally virtuous man on the other. The philosopher has something very important in common with the artisan on the one hand and this morally virtuous man on the other. He has in common with the artist that his perfection consists of knowledge above all. He has in common with the morally virtuous man that the philosopher is dedicated to his work, but in such a way that the dedication necessarily follows knowledge. Knowledge does not play that great a role in the case of the morally virtuous man.

We must of course never forget when speaking of philosophy in connection with Aristotle or Plato that philosopher in their sense is the same as what we understand frequently today by philosopher -- a professor of philosophy or men who do philosophy, to use this beautiful expression. That must be understood.

Reader: "Thus, although actions are entitled just and moderate, when they are such acts a just and moderate man would do, the agent is just and moderate not when he does these acts merely but when he does them in the way in which just and moderate men do them."

Strauss: This is clear. A man is not moderate if he is moderate regarding his food, for example. His being moderate in regard to his food may be due to his fear of pain, of an operation, or of punishment, and then he is not truly moderate. Only his external action looks like the external action of a moderate man. The whole action includes not only the external action but the spirit in which it is performed as well -- this is not a moderate man strictly speaking.

Student: But you have a sculptor who is unveiling a statue, where is the art? In the soul of the sculptor.

Strauss: And also in the work of art.

Student: It's not really a work of art -- it's a product.

Strauss: Sculptoring is in the sculptor's mind. His sculpturing necessarily culminates in a work hence separate from the sculptor,

as a shoe is from the shoemaker.

Student: Yes, but the shoe and the sculpture are not art. They are the works of a soul. Now if the shape of a soul regards shoes or statues, that's one thing, but if the soul regards action with regard to other men . . . so it would appear that the necessary distinction between an art and virtue is not that what is not the shape of a soul -- they are both shapes of the soul but with regard to different things.

Strauss: I do not know exactly what you are driving at. The artisan, says Aristotle, does not have to be, doesn't have to do his work for his own sake.

Student: Insofar as a man is a good carpenter or a man is a good shepherd, he will do these things for the sake of a beautiful table or a nice sheep.

Strauss: Not according to Aristotle; that is what Aristotle denies. The good carpenter is (inaudible) by the fact that he does good carpentry well. But carpentering well does not mean full dedication to carpentry. I know that it is possible to look at artisans in a very different way. But this is not the Aristotelian way. Even in the case of the sculptor -- the sculptor may be animated by a desire for fame and for money and since you mentioned justice, there is no contradiction between a first-rate carpenter or for that matter, a first-rate sculptor, and a man who cheats. Think of the example of (inaudible) who was at least accused of stolen gold which was given to him to make a statue. The artisan can be a good artisan while being an innoble man. Therefore, Aristotle goes so far in the Politics to say slaves, and he means of course the slaves you use in your home, must have more moral virtue than an artisan because the artisan doesn't live in your house. And therefore if the merchandise he brings you is satisfactory, that is all you expect of him. But you don't wish to have a man in your house who is drunk most of the time and God knows, steals, and whatever.

Student: But both arts and virtues have to do with more or less permanent shapings of the soul . . .

Strauss: Yes. There is this great difference, of which Aristotle speaks soon after, but I can mention it now. The good artisan can make good shoes as well as bad shoes. If he wants to -- he has complete mastery of the art, and if he wants to show you a masterpiece of a shoe which doesn't fit any human being, he will do that. And the good man cannot do the act better.

Another Student: Doesn't he imply here in this passage that with respect to the relationship between the arts and the virtues, the virtues are infinitely superior to the arts, because the arts are always chosen, with the exception of the architectonic arts, for the sake of something else. And the virtues must be chosen for their own selves. Within each architectonic order, among the

arts, for instance, leading up to the warrior's art --the virtuous man would choose the warrior's art for the sake of something else or the virtue of courage, and that even when it comes to the political art, which is the ordering of the arts in the proper way, philosophy stands above the political art, that though it might be the architectonic art, it can't be the architectonic principle.

Strauss: One should not speak of philosophy in our present stage -- I know that I have sinned against that rule -- and therefore I shouldn't appeal to that rule in order to silence you. But one point which you made there is very clear. It is doubtlessly correct and will be confirmed very soon by Aristotle that the virtues are of a much higher rank than the arts. This is clear. This is one point which you wanted to make, and this is good.

As to the other point, what you have in mind I believe is this question. What is the relation between the political art, the highest art in the state of action, and virtue? I can give you the Aristotelian answer. There is no moral virtue possible without the co-presence of practical wisdom. So in other words, you cannot be virtuous without being practically wise. I mean if you do not know when to be angry, when to be friendly, and so on and so on, then you will not be friendly or gentle or whatever it may be.

And now Aristotle says there are various manifestations of prudence. Prudence simply -- that is the prudence of the individual regarding his actions. Then the economic art, the management of the household. The prudence you can show in relation to your spouse, your children, your servants, and so on. But finally, the highest of them is the political art. So if we limit ourselves to this remark of Aristotle, the political art is the highest form of prudence, and therefore inseparable from (inaudible), but not identical with that, because it puts the emphasis on the intellectual ingredient. The intellectual ingredient would be much more important, relatively speaking, in political prudence than in private prudence. As regards private prudence, Aristotle can say, there is not much knowledge implied as we have seen, and as regards political prudence, he could not say that.

One could perhaps say, but this is not borne out by any explicit statement of Aristotle, that the percentage of knowledge and of moral virtue going into political prudence differs from the percentage of moral virtue going into private prudence. I.e., a higher percentage of knowledge needed for political prudence, and a lower percentage needed for private prudence. The degree of prudence required for solving the problem of Vietnam now is greater than any prudence likely to occur to any individual in his own act. Unless it is a very extreme situation, it is no longer a matter of prudence, but of a psychiatrist.

Now we are in 110 b, 5.

Reader: "It is correct that to say that a man becomes just by doing just actions than by doing moderate actions. And no one can have the remotest chance of becoming good without doing them."

Strauss: Yes. Did you hear the sentence? There is no way of becoming just except by acting justly and moderate. Would you admit that? I mean if you have not done that for quite some time, you cannot be just. This is a limitation on human freedom -- well, it can't be helped. It could perhaps be only a limitation on mere arbitrariness. But we cannot become good just by making a resolution to be good.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Could we not say we must try to be good sports. Take a simple case. The boy who may want to be a shoemaker -- you send him to a good shoemaker, don't you? But if possible even to a good shoemaker who is a tolerably good man, because he might do some harm to our boy if he were only a good shoemaker and not a good man. But what could we do to our boy if we want to make a good man out of him? To whom do we send him? To a master of the art of being good. To a good man. And apparently it is less easy to find good men than good shoemakers, and the reason being that there is a premium on the appearance of being a good man and you get exactly the same prize if you only appear to be good and are not. It is at least a possible interpretation. And you recognize a well-known Socratic question. Where do we find these teachers of wisdom? Aristotle disregards this here for the time being, or we can say he leaves this for the time being at a simplistic identification of the men who are thought to be good people with the truly good people.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: We are always confronted with examples, and now -- almost tax time -- and he could tell the boy how to make his tax declaration. (Inaudible) Or he sells a pair of shoes (inaudible) . . . is the price difference atrocious or is it only moderate? I leave it to your imagination or to your knowledge of literature to think of all the cases which could arise in the relation of an apprentice to a shoemaker and a master shoemaker who is at the same time a good man. That is what you had in mind, was it not?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There are various circumstances, where justice is required of a man who will always remain a private citizen -- are less interesting than those that would confront a man in public office. A judge and so on. Or in any political question which concerns man not merely as a private individual, as participating in legislating only by his vote. Surely, but therefore there are also discussions all the time -- the discussions are

never free from considerations of justice, and by listening to them and by looking at the different men who present the various issues, each with equal rhetorical force, you gradually may acquire some judgment in this area so one doesn't depend entirely on what a master shoemaker or a master human being tells us.

To begin with, we of course believe our parents. That goes without saying. And the boy who comes to the shoemaker has already some notions of right and wrong which he did not hear from the shoemaker and his notions may even take a great distrust of what the shoemaker tells him about what it is to be a good man.

Student: With respect to the shoemaker, aren't there other arts which form the straight line of bait with all the other arts, in other words, are there different orders of arts. The warriors (inaudible) specifically concerned with leading up to the warrior's art, but we can't say that a warrior is a good warrior unless he (inaudible) the virtue of courage. Now if a man is a shoemaker, it seems that he has a certain kind of relationship with all the other arts. Shoemaking is required for a warrior, a doctor, a philosopher, whatever. And yet it seems that all the shoemaker can do is be a good shoemaker. In other words, his profession, being at the lowest level, not connected with a specific virtue, but its only virtue can be in the thing being itself.

Strauss: Very simply, every art of this kind is accompanied by permeating all arts, and that is the money-making art. The shoemaker doesn't make shoes except to acquire money, and this money-making art is most obviously subject to justice, because as is shown in Locke, you can make money justly and unjustly. But this does not affect him as shoemaker. But one could say as a human being in need of income. And this applies to all men in one way or the other.

Another Student: That brings up the question that if every art is related to something lower, cannot every art also be related to something higher? The shoemaker, if he is to be a good shoemaker, must follow a certain regimen during the day -- get up early, work hard, and train himself accordingly. He must know how to train himself. So must a good sculptor, and a good sculptor acquire certain work habits (inaudible).

Strauss: This was the Aristotelian point. I can easily visualize a shoemaker's shop where you find the whole morning at any rate a sign "do not disturb" or whatever he might choose to write there. And yet, what he does -- the shoes which he makes or for that matter repairs -- will be excellently done. That's possible?

Student: That's possible, but a man who had enough moral fortitude say to go out and run and train himself to be an excellent runner would also probably have enough fortitude to study and . . .

Strauss: That is by no means necessary. I do not have the statistics. There must be statistics about athletic students and academic

students and vice versa. I have the feeling that this is not true.

Student: Is there a kind of activity that is required for excellence in the various professions that is interchangeable? A good man in one field can be transferred to another field and learn the job there.

Strauss: Let us make a projection of your suggestion into the most exact form. It means virtue is knowledge -- what Socrates said. The case which you made can be made more strongly for the (inaudible) position, but that got us into troubles, because we know of cases of men with very great knowledge and were not very virtuous, and some people who were not men of great knowledge and were decent and just, so that it is not so simple, and I think for practical purposes, and Aristotle wrote for practical purposes, the distinction between the arts and the virtues is minimal. If it is not quite exact, that is what bothers you. Aristotle has warned you in advance -- it cannot be quite exact, given the complexity and changeability of human affairs.

Now shall we read a bit more. Aristotle was proving that one can do things without being just; therefore, one can become just by doing the just things. The analogy of apprentice and master clarifies the situation. Let us read now in b, 12.

(The tape for the first part of this lecture ran out at this point.)

Strauss: Again -- I think something very elementary and commonsensical. If you don't do the good things, you will never become good. If you only sit in on seminars or lecture courses, then you won't become good by this way. So this is of course directed against what Socrates explicitly says. I think of a statement of Xenophon in the Memorabilia, Chapter 6, Section 6, where Socrates has the confidence to say that the just men are those who knows the laws about human beings. As if at least the mouth-pieces of the gangsters did not have the knowledge of the laws regarding human beings as the most honest men in the community had. This is of course a caricature of what Socrates meant. Aristotle avoids even these caricatures. The doing of good things, not the knowing of them, makes us good.

Aristotle has now completed his previous discussion of how we become good, and then he says at the beginning of the next chapter, we have to consider what virtue is. This seems to be an apparent contradiction with what he said before, that we do not make our investigation in order to know what virtue is. Of course, we do not make this investigation in order to know what virtue is, but nevertheless we have to know what virtue is or else we cannot know how to become virtuous in a clear and solid manner, but Aristotle has inverted that true order in order to bring out the fact that it is not the knowledge of what virtue

is but the doing of what is virtuous which makes us virtuous. So this is no different.

Reader: "Three things come to be in the soul -- emotion, capacity, and disposition. Virtue must be one of these. By the emotions I mean desire, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendship, hatred, longing, jealousy, pity, and generally those states which are accompanied by pleasure or pain. The capacities are the faculties by virtue of which we can be said to be liable to the emotions, capable of feeling anger or pain. The dispositions are the formed states of character in virtue of which we are well or ill disposed in respect of the emotions. For instance, we have a bad disposition in regard to anger, and we are disposed to get angry too violently or not violently enough. A good disposition if we habitually feel a moderate amount of anger, and similarly in respect of the other emotions."

Strauss: Virtue can be only one of these three things. Aristotle doesn't mean that these are the only three things that come into being in the soul, but the only three things which are of any relevance in this respect, which could conceivably be the beginnings of good or bad actions. The distinction is clear, I think, that affections or passions -- how did he say -- abilities, or faculties . . .

Student: Capacities.

Strauss: All right. And the third things are habits. comes from the word _____ which means to have, to hold, to keep, and can therefore mean derivatively also to keep, or have a posture toward, and that is what Aristotle means here by habit -- to have and keep a posture toward affections. So virtue and vice cannot be affections or passions. They can only lie in the posture towards the passions. In modern times, some philosophers have tried to discover a passion which as such would be the root of all goodness. The most famous of these passions in modern times is compassion. For Aristotle, compassion is only one of the many passions which as such has nothing to do with virtue and vice, because we have to see with whom to have compassion, what circumstances. To be compassionate as such is not a virtue. It lies also here, for example, love or friendship, of whom, under what circumstances, at what times, etc.

Reader: "Now the virtues and vices are not emotions because we are not pronounced good or bad according to our emotions but we are according to our virtues and vices, nor are we either praised or blamed for our emotions. A man is not praised for being frightened or angered, nor is he blamed for being angry merely, but angry in a certain way. We are praised or blamed for our virtues and vices."

Strauss: Is this clear? Virtues and vices cannot be found in the passions or affections or emotions, because we do not praise

a man, we say he's given to anger or he's perfectly free from anger, and the latter would not be a term of praise, because there are occasions as we said before.

Reader: "Again, we are not angry or afraid from choice, but the virtues are certain kinds of choice, or at all events, not without choice. Moreover, we are said to be moved by the emotions and in respect to virtues and vices, we are not said to be moved but be disposed in a certain way, and the same considerations also prove that the virtues and vices are not capacities, since we are not pronounced good or bad, praised or blamed, merely by reason of our capacities. Again, we possess certain capacities by nature but we are not borne good or bad by nature. This however we spoke of before. If then the virtues are neither emotions nor capacities, it remains that they are disposition, and thus we have stated what virtue is generically."

Strauss: According to its genus, virtue or vice are habits, and now we have to find out as it says immediately afterward -- we have to know not only the genus but also the species, and that he will show in the sequel.

Virtue is a habit, but this must be rightly understood, that vice is also a habit. So if we say smoking is a habit, that is according to Aristotelian reason. Smoking is a vice. Vice is an enslaving habit; virtue is a liberating habit. Both the enslaving and the liberating habits are habitual postures toward the various affections or passions. That's the main point which Aristotle makes. Aristotle gives here as you have seen a rather detailed discussion why the virtues cannot be passions nor faculties nor powers.

Pleasure is an acquired freedom, an acquired mastery, and therefore the example of the shoemakers' apprenticeship and the master was not so far-fetched. It brings out something what Aristotle said. Only an acquired mastery regarding the passions is somehow more impressive than to have acquired the mastering of the art of the shoemaker and perhaps even of that of the sculptor and painter. So in this respect there is a great difference between the ancients and the moderns. For Aristotle and the classics all together, the so-called imitative arts, like sculpturing and painting, are still arts, lower than moral virtue and surely lower than understanding, wisdom.

There is no such thing like aesthetics in classical antiquity. This term was coined by a German philosopher in the late 18th century. This science didn't exist. But originally aesthetics did not mean the philosophic understanding of arts, the fine arts, but it meant simply the understanding of the beautiful, and where is it written that beauty exists only by virtue of the fine arts? The ancient beauty was found in the first place in natural things, and not necessarily in a particularly beautiful rose,

but in human beings. And compared with which the beauty caused by a portrait painter or a statue was very defective. After all, neither a painter nor a sculptor can make a beautiful human being. Living and walking around, making speeches, and having all kinds of surprises in store. What happened in modern times, say in the early 19th century, was that what is beautiful by nature was thrown out from aesthetics, and only the beautiful by arts, the fine arts, was considered, and that is the meaning of aesthetics now.

And then there was a further step taken in the 19th century when some man wrote a book -- Aesthetics of the Ugly -- and today one can safely say that aesthetics has nothing whatever to do with the beautiful anymore, but it has to do with works of art. That still remains at the end of the process. The ancients were in this respect and many others much more "naive", or in other words, nearer to nature. But this subject we will take up from time to time.

We will begin with the next chapter the next time.

Lecture XII

Aristotle's Ethics, March 20, 1968

Strauss: The habitual mastery . . . and this mastery is accompanied by a specific pleasure deriving from that very mastery. Some of you will have read Plato's Phaedo in which the same subject is discussed in the following form. The human soul is compared to a chariot, that is to say charioteer, and two horses. The two horses are the passions, and the charioteer is reason. Reason restrains or impels the passions, whatever the case may be, but it is not the servant of the passions.

Now this statement made by Aristotle gives only the genus of virtue -- virtue is a habit. But the question is, in order to know what a thing is, we have to know not only the genus, but also the specific difference. In the case of man, it is sufficient to know that he is a living being, but dogs and cats are also living, but the specific difference of man, namely the living being which possesses reason, and the same specification is needed regarding virtue. And I think at this point we begin in 1106, al4.

Reader: "But it is not enough to say that it is merely a disposition."

Strauss: Namely virtue . . . or I translate it habit.

Reader: "We must also say what sort it is."

Strauss: What kind of, what sort of, a habit it is.

Reader: "It must then be said that all virtue has a twofold effect on the things to which it belongs. It not only renders itself good, but it also causes it to perform its work well. For example, the virtue of the eye makes the eye good and makes its work good, since by the virtue of the eye we see well."

Strauss: See well, seeing being the work of the eye.

Reader: "Similarly, virtue in a horse makes it a good horse and also good at galloping, at carrying its rider, and at facing the enemy. If therefore this is true of all things, virtue in a man will be the habit which renders him a good man and also which will cause him to perform his work well."

Strauss: Now the specific difference of virtue -- virtue is a habit which makes men good or through which men are good, through which he does the work of man well. The example of the horse given here is characteristic of Aristotle. The horse is understood as an animal serving man and we moderately would raise the question, well is not an animal serving man a domesticated animal inferior to the animal in its state of nature? And you know the

various things which are said about domestication, but for Aristotle that is not so because the animal which serves man participates, if in a remote way, but in a non negligent way, in rationality. He does certain things which are reasonable. Assuming that waging war and the other things are reasonable, as Aristotle would assume. So the animals which can be domesticated are higher from this point of view than a king of animals who cannot be domesticated.

Student: Would you say then that the horse is more natural?

Strauss: In one sense, yes; in another, no. As far as to live according to reason or in the service of reason, more natural than not to be in such service. One could say the domesticated animal has reached its nature, and is in this sense in a state of nature. That is simply what Aristotle implies. Yes?

Reader: "We have already indicated what this means but it would throw more light on the subject if we consider what the nature of virtue is. Now of everything that is continuous and divisible, it is possible to take the smaller part or the larger part or an equal part, and these parts may be larger or smaller or equal with respect to the thing itself or relatively to us, an equal part being the mean between excess and efficiency. By the mean of the thing I denote a point equally distant from either extreme which is one and the same for everybody. By the mean which is relative to us that amount which is neither too much nor too little, and this is not one of the things for everybody. For example, let ten be many and two few, and then one takes the mean with respect to the thing. If one takes six, since six minus two equals ten minus six, and this is the mean according to arithmetical proportion."

"But we cannot arrive at this method at the mean relative to us. Suppose that ten pounds of food is a large ration for anybody and two pounds a small one. It does not follow that a trainer will prescribe six pounds, for perhaps even this will be a large ration or a small ration for the particular athlete who is to receive it; it is a small ration for a Milo, but a large one for a man just beginning to go into athletics, and similarly with the amount of running or wrestling exercise to be taken."

"In the same way then an expert in any art must avoid excess and deficiency, and seek the mean, the mean that is not of the thing but relative to us."

Strauss: Now what does goodness mean, Aristotle asks now. And he says it is the equal, the equal in a sense of a mean between the too much and the too little. But mean can be understood in two ways; first, according to our sense of arithmetical proportion, as Aristotle says, six is the mean between ten and two.

But this is not what we are concerned with in moral matters, because in moral matters we look for the mean with a view to us, what is too little for us and too much for us, and therefore also what is the right mean with a view to us.

Here we have to consider not only the things but ourselves, and therefore there is a geometric proportion. The case is similar to that of what is sanitary or healthy for the body - that depends very much on the individual and that depends very much on the circumstances, and therefore this complication. Yes?

Reader: "If therefore the way in which every science performs its work well by looking to the mean and applying that as a standard to its production, hence the common remark about a perfect work of art that you cannot take from it nor add to it, meaning that excess and deficiency destroy perfection, while adherence to the mean preserves it. If then, as we say, good craftsmen look to the mean as they work, - and if virtue, like nature, is more accurate and better than any form of art, it will follow that virtue has the quality of hitting the mean."

Strauss: In the case of the arts, that is good from which you cannot take away or to which you cannot add without spoiling the product. Think of a shoe, or think of a perfect statue; a perfect book is a book from which you cannot take away anything and to which you cannot add anything without spoiling it, so in this case here it is clear the perfection, the goodness, consists in a mean between too much and too little.

And now he turns from the arts to virtue. Aristotle says virtue and nature are more exact than any art. What does he mean by that? A good man cannot act badly if he wills, for his goodness consists precisely in his being unable to will to act badly. He is inclined only towards the end, the proper end, just as its nature, but the artisan can do his work badly if he wills, and that is even part of his mastership. The inclination of the good work is not part of the artisan. It is alien to it.

While virtue is superior to art, one can also consider the following fact, that every art deals with a partial good, shoemaker, carpenter, physician, and virtue is concerned with the partial good and something which is fundamentally a means for other ends. Virtue is concerned with the end. Yes?

Reader: "I refer to moral virtue, for this is concerned with passions and actions in which one can have excess or deficiency or due mean. For example, one can be frightened or bold, fear of desire or anger or pity, experience pleasure and pain in general either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly, whereas to feel these passions at the right time at the right occasion, towards the right people, and purpose and in the right manner - is to feel the best amount of them which is the mean amount, and the best amount is of course the mark of virtue."

"And similarly, there can be excess, deficiency, and the mean in actions. Now virtue is concerned with passions in which excess is an error and deficiency is blamed, while the mean is praised and is prosperous. And these both belong to virtue."

Strauss: So in other words, we have to consider not only what is good generally speaking because there is no answer to that question proper, but under what circumstances, (inaudible) the consideration for circumstances as I mentioned, and toward whom, and on what occasions, for what purpose, and in what manner. This action which is good in all these respects - action in the mean as distinguished from excess or defects. Yes?

Reader: "Virtue therefore is a mean state in the sense that it is able to hit the mean. Again, error is multiform because evil is a form of the unlimited as in the Pythagorean imagery, and good of a limited, whereas success is possible in one way only. It is easy to fail and difficult to succeed. It is easy to miss the target and difficult to hit it. So this is another reason why excess and deficiency are a vice, and observance of the mean a mark of virtue. Good men are so simply; bad men are so in all kinds of ways."

Strauss: The latter is a verse which Aristotle quotes. In each case only one way of acting rightly, and innumerable ways of doing wrong or badly. That we must keep in mind -- Aristotle is not a relativist. There is one and only one way of acting in a situation rightly. This doesn't mean that all men would have to act in this situation because they are different people of different characters, of different circumstances, and that should be considered. Yes?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Why could he not say that? In what way is this relevant to the question of relativism or not relativism?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The philosophical life and the tyrannical life, being both ways of life, are to that extent comparable, and since the one is definitely superior to the other, one could at least raise the question, how much superior? That Socrates does not mean this too literally can be assumed. Even if we took it literally, it would not be wholly absurd for the reason I indicated, and as for the "relativism" in the Republic it is not smaller than that in Aristotle, because while there is a certain agreement, for example, all are supposed to be just and moderate, all members of the society, but the justice and moderation of the lower class is not identical with justice and moderation of the higher class. So when you say they are all moderate and just, you overlook for certain reasons the profound difference between justice, which consists merely in

obeying others, and the justice which does not consist in obeying others. Plato makes a distinction between genuine virtue and (inaudible) virtue, and this great difference is covered by the single term 'virtue.' We will find perhaps some better examples for that.

Aristotle has now succeeded in giving a complete definition of virtue. Not only the genus to which virtue belongs, a habit, but also what kind of a habit. This he will repeat at the beginning of the next chapter. Will you read that Please?

Reader: "Virtue then is a purposive habit being in the mean relative to us, and thus being determined by reason, and as a prudent man would determine it."

Strauss: Virtue is a habit of preferring - a more literal translation. It is in the middle with a view to us and not with a view in an absent way. This mean is determined by reason, by logos, and is so how a reasonable man would determine it.

Aristotle has mentioned all these ingredients of the final definition, but not all with great emphasis. For example, there was no great emphasis on preferring or choosing, but it was mentioned in 1106a, 2-3.

Now Aristotle says here this mean is determined by reason, but he adds how the reasonable man would determine it. Why is this necessary? The reason which Aristotle has here in mind is the reason of the man on the spot, not a disembodied reason, that is a reasonable man. A man who considers all the circumstances, and the point which he makes here by implication is this: (and this is the reason why he is not a relativist) -- all reasonable men, all sensible men, would agree that the action of A, the sound action of A, is a good action, regardless of whether one of them is A or not. Is this point clear? There is an indefinite variety of good actions, given the indefinite variety of circumstances and so on. But there is no variety possible regarding what a reasonable man would say regarding an action in these and these circumstances. Take any example. Say we speak of a perfect hostess confronted with someone suffering from severe bodily defects, yet without making him fear this defect, and without drawing the company's attention to that defect. Should we treat differently a heady old girl who has just cussed her mother, and a 50 year old man who has just cussed his father. Elementary. But these are the things which Aristotle has denied. Later on Aristotle will say that it is not so much reason, but sense perception, which supplies the decision. Now this must be rightly understood. It is not mere sense perception in the sense in which we perceive a chair, but something like sense perception. You cannot tell a man who is color blind what blue or green is; that is unsayable, strictly speaking. It cannot be defined; it cannot be described. You can give it a wave-length but a wave-length wouldn't tell a color-blind

man what the color is. So there is no substitute for this kind of perception, but as I said Aristotle does not mean by perception sense perception, but like sense perception.

Now we have a word which Aristotle uses in this sense and which is still in general use. We speak of taste -- taste being in the first place a sense perception, but we apply it metaphorically, for example a perfect hostess has it, or which any man acting well is supposed to have it. One can also even divert feeling which was so common and is perhaps still common since the 18th century, and is of course also primarily a sense perception, and then transferred to this kind of perception from which one cannot - which no reason can substitute for. Yes?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, but it does not have this peculiar distinction between the beautiful and the good, and people speak today sometimes of the aesthetic character of Aristotle's Ethics, they mean aesthetic in contradistinction to ethical. Therefore the term is misleading.

But of course Aristotle does not exclude the possibility that a man if he acts in a very nice manner and appropriate manner in complicated circumstances, and if one asked him why did you act this way, he might say I don't know - I just felt this was the proper thing to do. And Aristotle does not exclude the possibility that if he would give it further thought, he might be able to give an explicit reason for what he did. But he might also say it is rather pedantic to try to spell it out. But Aristotle does not say much about these kind of cases. Yes?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I believe the cases are somewhat different, because what makes decisions of this kind so difficult is that you do not know the plans and intentions of the enemy, nor his strength because that is part of his whole policy to conceal his situation and especially his weaknesses from the enemy. That is the particular question here. Is it a praise of a statesman or a politician to say that his policy is delicate - I don't think so. Take the famous statement of Burger - (inaudible . . .) is as such not good simply because it is not communicable. But this delicate, especially of the social virtues, that is something for which we would not find an equivalent. Surely there is a certain kinship, but one must consider also the material. Say a refined society one one hand and politics on the other. You cannot expect the same kind of niceness in both spheres. And you only have to read the daily papers -- the things which one man says about his opponent, whether true or false. That is not the point. They are taken for granted, and it would be impossible in polite society and yet in their sphere they are read.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The ethical basis of politics does not mean that the level of sophistication of politics is the same as that of nice society. Aristotle would go much further in this respect than most people would relate to -- in the Politics he disapproves of the practice of running for office. Running for office was perfectly acceptable to all Greek politicians, just as it is today. In Rome, too -- in Rome it was called ambitus, from which the word 'ambition' arises. It is improper that someone should display his true or alleged virtues and do other things which are unworthy of a perfect gentleman. So Aristotle would be willing to go very far in the direction which you suggest. But I think he would still admit that there is a very great difference nevertheless in the political arena and what can be done in a highly cultivated group of men.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: You suggested a great variety of considerations and I am not sure whether I understood all of them, that different regimes, that regimes of different rank are necessary or possible for different societies, Aristotle emphasizes as strongly as any man ever did. There is no difficulty in that. But for the question as you stated it at the beginning of your statement, of course different people act differently in different circumstances. But this may be due in the first place to the fact that some are good men and others are bad men. And so how the bad man acts should not be a (inaudible). But the good man might act differently for different reasons. Of course, the circumstances are different, so that the same good man would act in one way in circumstances (inaudible), and would act another way in circumstance B. And thirdly, there may be circumstances which do not cause any moral difficulty. Differences due to mere customs, to morally indifferent customs. Left driving or right driving. The English are not inferior to the other nations because they have a different way of driving nor are the others superior to them. So these three cases would at least have to be discussed in order to give an answer to your question, which consisted of quite a few parts.

Student: What of the statement which is used too commonly - when we are supposed to have an 'honest difference of opinion.'

Strauss: From Aristotle's point of view, that should be impossible. For example, one may be better informed than the other. Then the worse informed would of course say you have a better judgment than me. That is what I meant -- there is an infinite variety of decisions to be made. But the sensible man confronted with the same set of circumstances would all agree as to what is right in these circumstances.

Student: But the men themselves differ -- would that hinder the decision?

Strauss: The one is more experienced, more mature, than the other. That would make an enormous difference.

Student: But let's say they had different natural dispositions.

Strauss: But this difference they would have overcome by the time they (inaudible). This is surely what Aristotle means.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I think the simplest example which would occur would be Socrates. A man who was entirely sensible. Socrates had the additional advantage because he had his (inaudible), and so he was a privileged man, but still whether due to his reason alone or to the divine gift, he was perfectly sensible, and that is what Plato tries to show by presenting him in his Dialogue - I mean nothing less than bad.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I mean we must not make the highest demands, but in a general way there are no sensible men.

Student: The line is a somewhat arbitrary line - at what point do you become sensible . . .

Strauss: I can only say that Aristotle said at least three times that no exact lines can be drawn. It is understandable that you want to have exactness, but the situation is . . . this is a point for Plato and for Aristotle and I think one can say for all pre-modern philosophers and quite a few modern philosophers up to a certain age. Individuality goes without saying. We all have individualities, but our task consists in assimilating ourselves to something universal, and so to have individual characteristics is not to have something to boast of . . .

Student: As we assimilate, at about what point of universal do we become reasonable?

Strauss: That is what Aristotle is peaking about -- virtue is his universal. There are a variety of virtues, and he will describe all of the virtues while he goes. And then when we are through that, we will have a notion of what that universal is.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Let me state it in a somewhat exaggerated manner in order to make it quite clear. The idea of the good as Aristotle presents it here and as most people believe it is meant is an absolute. For Aristotle goodness resides in individual actions in individual circumstances. So if you want to see what goodness is, you have to look at it in individual actions. There you see goodness. The general statement is only some help towards seeing goodness,

The goodness itself consists in the concrete action, the individual action, and this is something radically different. It is even a greater difference than the idea of the dog, you know who does not bark and does not run around and this here dog which does all these things. The difference is even greater, because there is at least this same dog from the beginning of his life until his end and here we have the actions in these and these circumstances.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Sure, but this means of course that a more sensible man's judgment is to be preferred to the less sensible judgment, so there is no relativism in this sense.

Now I think we should now continue where we left off.

Reader: 1107a, 2. "It is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of defect. Furthermore, it is a mean state in that whereas the vices either fall short of or exceed what is right in passions and in actions, virtue finds and chooses the median."

Strauss: Both -- finding the mean and choosing. If a man is only good enough to find a mean, but doesn't choose it, then he is not a reasonable man. On the other hand, he cannot choose it without having found out before. So this choice is not pre-existing; he has to find it. A man who chooses the right life, but is not able to find it by himself, is not truly good. Virtue is a mean which finds and chooses the mean. Yes?

Reader: "Hence, while in respect of its substance, and the definition that states what it is, virtue is the mean, and in point of excellence and rightness it is an extreme."

Strauss: What does this distinction mean? According to what virtue intends, it is a mean. Otherwise it is a peak. Is this distinction clear? -- that it is in one respect and the most important respect a mean, but in other respects which is by no means negligible, it is a peak. I will give you an example from Aristotle's Politics. In the Politics Aristotle has two ways of discussing the various kinds of regimes. One is starting from, and there are two considerations, one, number of rulers, b, goodness or badness, he arrives at his schema -- kinship, aristocracy, polity, and at the bad side, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. But he has another starting point which is less visible but not as important. And here he starts from the most fundamental and common political cleavage, namely that between the rich and the poor. Now the regime in which the rich rule is the oligarchy and the regime in which the poor rule is democracy. Both are from Aristotle's point of view faulty extremes. And he has to seek a mean, and as a matter of fact he finds at least two means on different levels. The means owe their goodness ultimately to the fact that they are means, i.e., not faulty extremes. If I can

perhaps put it at the blackboard -- if this is democracy, and this is oligarchy, so there is a mean, but Aristotle does not mean this mean, the arithmetic mean, but he means the mean here which is higher than the two extremes, avoiding the mistakes of both extremes and combining the advantages of the two. As a matter of fact in the Politics it is this way. There are at least three means, and the highest would be aristocracy.

Student: What relationship does this mean have to the Hegelian synthesis?

Strauss: Surely none, if Aristotle starts from Hegel's point of view, but if we want to be clever, he might say that what Hegel had in mind by a synthesis has indeed a certain kinship, because the key of the Hegelian synthesis is of course that the original level, the level of the original antithesis, is given up, in favor of a higher level. To that extent you are right. It might be of some help perhaps for the understanding of Hegel to think of it. Your question is by no means ambiguous, but it is not -- surely the question did not exist for Aristotle in this form. He would never call this a dialectical process. I do not think that it played any role in the formation of Hegel's thought. Especially since for Aristotle the principle of contradiction is absolutely sacred, whereas for Hegel's dialectics it is not sacred.

Now there is one point which I thought we should reconsider for a moment. The essence of virtue is the mean or mediocrity. In the sense in which Homer speaks of golden mediocrity. For Aristotle golden mediocrity is not mediocrity. Virtue is in the mean because virtue belongs to the same genus as the vices, as we have before seen. It is a right habit towards the passions in question, whereas the vices are the wrong habits. But they both have to deal with the same habits, and therefore they belong to the same genus. So the true extremes are the virtues and the vices, but the vice does not intend to be bad, say the bad as bad. It intends one or the other extreme as good, so the coward does not intend cowardly action as cowardly action, but as good, namely with a view to saving his life. The virtue intends the mean explicitly as good.

Now I think we should consider for a moment a critique of Aristotle's doctrine of mediocrity in modern times, by Thomas Hobbes, in his book on The Citizen, Chapter 23, Book 3. He says . . . (inaudible) . . . "that the goodness of actions consists in this, that they are directed toward peace, and badness consists in this, that they are directed or leading up to (inaudible). For this reason they have founded a moral philosophy which is wholly alien to the moral law and not consist in good itself. They wanted that the nature of virtue consisted in some mean between two extremes and the vices in these very extremes. And this is manifestly (inaudible). For daring is placed and

regarded as a virtue under the name of courage although it is extreme provided the cause of the daring is approved. The quantity of a thing which has (inaudible) . . . regardless of whether the quantity is great or small or mean does not make liberality, but the cause of the giving (inaudible) Nor is it injustice if a gift to someone of my own more than is due."

The latter part is the basis for misunderstanding because Aristotle -- if you give more to a man than you owe, you are of course not unjust. In other words, justice is the only virtue which has not two faulty extremes but one, injustice. So Hobbes should have known that but he didn't. Aristotle is of course aware of that but the cause must be approved. And then indeed the daring may be extreme if the cause is good, but other things also have to be considered. It is a very inadequate argument, but not unpopular, in this century because Hugo Grotius in his great work on the Right of War and Peace makes a similar criticism.

Now go on at this point.

Reader: "Not every action or passion however admits of the observance of a mean. Indeed, the very means of some directly imply evil. For instance, delight at evil, shamelessness, envy, and of actions, adultery, theft, murder. All these and similar actions and passions are blamed as being bad in themselves. It is not the excess or deficiency of them that we blame. It is impossible therefore ever to go right in regard to them. One must always be wrong, nor does right or wrong depend on the circumstances, for instance whether one commits adultery with the right woman at the right time in the right way. But the mere commission of (inaudible) is wrong. One might as well propose that there be a mean and an excess and a deficiency in acts of injustice, or cowardness or profligacy, which would imply that one could have a mean amount of excess or deficiency, an excessive amount of excess and a deficient amount of deficiency. But just as there can be no excess or deficiency in moderation and justice, because the mean is in a sense the extreme, so there can be no observance of the mean nor excess nor deficiency in the corresponding vicious acts mentioned above. But however they are committed, they are wrong. To put it in general terms, there is no such thing as observing a mean in excess or deficiency, nor (inaudible) or falling short of the observance of a mean."

Strauss: Now this is a (inaudible) passage. There are actions and passions that are simply bad in which there cannot be a right mean, an excess or a defect, and one cannot say for example as classical Greek authors say of the Spartans they taught their boys to steal well, meaning so that they would not be caught.

And this could be used only in a metaphoric sense. You could also speak of (inaudible) and similar things. Just as there cannot be an excess or defect of the virtues themselves, one cannot be moderately virtuous or moderately vicious. If you are virtuous, then you are wholly and not moderately. The opposite (inaudible) would be something like Machiavelli, who spoke of a middle way using an Aristotelian expression, but he spoke of the middle way between virtue and vice by which there is the best of both worlds. But here is a difficult of which some of you are aware. How does Aristotle know that these things he mentions here are base or bad? How does he know that? After all, this is meant to be a (inaudible) book and therefore the question must be raised.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Everyone who is not corrupted by self-interest would admit that. But if you want a reason, Aristotle would admit that and say what would happen if these things were changed, and he has to prove in his Politics later on that private property is needed, that the monogamous family is needed in order to have a good society, and these prohibitions follow as a matter of course.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But is not the moderation that people understand by errors the moderation that (inaudible)? Is this not in a way the most important part of moderation? And more important in moderation regarding food and drink.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The only thing I can say here and this is a very long question, is this. I think Socrates is working his way toward the following distinction. There is one sphere in which to be moderate it is absurd, and that is philosophy. If you say of a man that is a moderate philosopher, that is not a true philosopher. Another thing is speech -- speech must be moderate. But thinking cannot be moderate if it is true thinking.

Moderation in pursuit of justice is vice according to Aristotle's way of thinking. I remind you again of the famous (inaudible) discussion -- virtue is an extreme, and at the same time a peak. What you mean by it, whether political action, should not be prudent, and Aristotle of course says yes, but that does not mean this exactly is a just thing. The man who is concerned with what is feasible without violence or bloodshed, he precisely is a more just man than a man who than a man who in the name of justice (inaudible).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: One would have to say petty theft is less bad than murder.

Student: Couldn't one murder be worse than another?

Strauss: Sure. Naturally, but this doesn't do away with the fact that they are in both cases murder.

Student: I understand this point here that there is no excess or deficiency with respect to the certain kind of action.

Strauss: Aristotle says you can not say murder committed under such and such circumstances is good -- that you can never say. You can only say murder committed in such and such circumstances is more excusable than murder done under other circumstances. There is a great difficulty here to which we will come back.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The difficulty in terms of Aristotle's text is this. You remember that he had spoken in 1104a,306 of the fact that in moral matters not even the universal statement are simply exact or true. There is nothing stable in this field. Now are the things he mentions here, murder and so on, universal things of the greatest exactness. Thou shalt not murder -- period.

Now what is the difficulty. Aristotle says it is not as dark as all that. If we take the case you referred to -- say the man with the gun -- It might be necessary to call this madman or it might be necessary to take away the gun.

Now what is the answer of Plato and Aristotle and of many men since? Take the simple case which Plato discusses -- a man (inaudible) a gun. In the meantime he has become insane, . . . (inaudible) . . . There is another principle to which you refer, publicly or explicit. Justice must be good. Now if the seemingly just action is in the circumstances not salutary but harmful, then you must not do it. The legislator may sound this out in more precise terms or he may fail to do so, and any power of judgment would be guided by the revelation that all virtues must be (inaudible), and therefore if the actions are dictated by justice or courage, or whatever, it is blatantly not salutary. And salutary does not mean salutary merely to me or to you but to the society at large.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: So you would have to use a different (inaudible) of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments say thou shalt not kill. Killing comprises most good and bad killing and how to draw the line is a very great difficulty. The example with which the classics were most familiar is of course war. By understanding war as the killing of enemy soldiers and it is not regarded as murder. Except by some people who maintain every

killing is hard to maintain because it would lead to the consequence that you should not kill any other living being, and this comes into trouble (inaudible). For some centuries it was possible to say killing of enemy soldiers does not matter, but killing of enemy civilians does matter. With the progress of military technology this distinction has become quite inapplicable. Or take other cases -- one cannot deny the legitimacy of enemy espionage. If a man has found immensely important information, and is prevented from bringing it home by a perfectly innocent bystander. If he would push him away in such a manner that he dies as a consequence of that, is this an evil action. You find many cases which allude to this consequence.

But we seem to have deviated from Aristotle, but not quite -- there is some evidence that he has this view, the view that there is nothing, no general rule of this kind, which is universally valid.

There is a notion known to Aristotle's tradition which brings out and compares this idea. There are principles of actions which are universally valid. That is called sometimes natural law and natural right. Now Aristotle discusses natural law and natural right most in his Rhetoric and in a single page in the Nicomachean Ethics. There are some examples of natural law and natural right. None of these examples here are mentioned there. So the Aristotelian element which shows that the natural law requires this, is supplied by his statement or non-statement on natural right and natural law.

Now let us read to the end of this section.

Reader: "We must not however rest content with saying this in general; we must show that it applies to the particular virtues. In a practical discussion although general statements have a . . ."

(The first half of the tape ran out at this point.)

Strauss: Now in order to fulfill his promise Aristotle speaks in the sequel about his virtues and vices, the purpose being to show that in each case we have essentially the mean flanked in each case by two extremes, an excess or a defect. The examples -- courage and virtue -- courage is on the one hand and over-(inaudible) on the other. Courage in the case of moderation, i.e., the proper posture towards sensible pleasures, indulgence, self-indulgence on the one extreme, and on the other extreme, complete insensitivity to the pleasures, (inaudible). And the right mean is moderation. This applies to other matters like anger, gentleness in the mean, inability to get angry, which is a defect, and on the other extreme is constant irascibility. Now this will be taken up by Aristotle in detail in Books 3 and 4 where he discusses the various virtues.

Now there are a few -- we cannot read this all -- but we can perhaps read a few points. Let us turn to 1108a, 30.

Reader: "There are also modes of observing the means in the sphere of and in relation to the passions. For though the sense of shame is not a virtue it is praised and so is the modest man. For in these matters also one man is spoken of as bashful and another as excessive. For example, the fearful man whose sense of shame takes alarm at everything and he who is deficient at shame or is abashed by nothing whatsoever is shameless, whereas the middle character is modest."

"Again, righteous indignation is the observance of a mean between envy and delight and evil, and these qualities are concerned with the pains and pleasures felt at the fortunes of one's neighbors. A righteously indignant man is pained by undeserved good fortune and a jealous man exceeds him by his pain at all the good fortune of others. While the man who delights in evil so far falls short that he actually feels pleasure.

Strauss: So the point which Aristotle makes later on -- he will not discuss the case of the man of righteous indignation. In this work, at any rate. He will discuss a sense of shame. It is clear that sense of shame is not a virtue because it presupposes that you make mistakes of which you are ashamed. A perfect gentleman does not mistake things, and therefore he does not have a sense of shame. So sense of shame reaches only the young who cannot be supposed to have reached propriety.

But if he sees this enumeration of the three kinds of men -- the man of moral indignation, the envious man, and the man who derives pleasure from seeing man in an evil or bad condition, no one who enjoys the well-being of others or at least who deserve well-being, (inaudible).

Aristotle discusses here altogether 11 moral virtues, in this enumeration, and in an earlier enumeration of the passions 1105b, 11-12, he enumerates 11 passions. One of the passions is compassion, mercy, but there is no virtue regarding mercy. Regarding the passion of mercy, and that is very interesting, and that is connected with the point I raised before.

Now there is no case in Aristotle for such a universal benevolence. You can be benevolent only toward people you know. I.e., strictly speaking, your benevolence cannot be universal. What later on can be called the virtue of humanity is in Greek philanthropia and this is not a virtue, but one can perhaps state the classical view about it as follows: there are some people who like birds and there are others wholike dogs and there are also people who like human beings as human beings. That is an interesting trait but it is not in itself a virtue. So that the other virtues like justice are much more important.

You should read the end of Book 2 by all means. Let us read a few more pages.

Reader: 1109b,7. "We must in everything be most on our guard against what is pleasant and against pleasure, for when pleasure is on trial, we are not impartial judges. The right course is therefore to feel towards pleasure as the elders of the people felt toward Helen."

Strauss: Namely to say that -- we understand that someone successfully abducted her, but as far as our city is concerned, the sooner she leaves it, the better.

Reader: ". . . and to apply their word to her on every occasion, for if we roundly bid her to be gone, we shall be less likely to err."

"These then to sum up the matter are the precautions that will best enable us to hit the mean."

"But perhaps it is a difficult thing to do especially in particular cases, for it is not easy to define in what manner and with what people and on what sort of grounds and for how long one ought to be angry, and in fact, we sometimes praise men who err on the side of defect in this matter and call them gentle; sometimes those who are quick to anger manly."

"However, we do not blame one who diverges a little from the right course, either on the side of the too much or the too little,"

Strauss: This was a question which was raised by some of you -- that it's a very great difficulty to draw a clear line. And then what does Aristotle say in the next sentence?

Reader: "But one who diverges more widely will be blamed for his error is the most noticed."

Strauss: It is noticed; that is the point, for it is noticed by other human beings. The implication here of the (inaudible), namely, the abstraction from an omniscient god who would see everything and judge nicely every deviation however wrong that has to do with the human judgment. Now one can say well, if this is so, if there is a certain crudeness of judgment inevitable in this sphere, how is this compatible with the exactness of which Aristotle has spoken before? The answer is given in the immediate sequel.

Reader: "Yet to what degree and how seriously a man must err to be blamed is not easy to define on principle, for"

Strauss: Not easy to define by (inaudible), a universal or general statement.

Reader: "For in fact no object of perception is easy to define, questions of degree depend on particular circumstances and the and the decision lies with perception."

Strauss: Sense perception, but now understood in a large sense of the term. But as I said before, Aristotle does not exclude completely the possibility that he can in many cases spell out this judgment of taste, of feeling, and give the precise reason why we should behave toward X in this situation and in this manner and Y in that situation and in that manner. That can be done and that is I think a good exercise to do that sometime.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The question is ultimately this -- how do we know the highest principles of conduct? Do we know them by feeling and only by feeling? There are two possibilities -- for Aristotle the feeling, or as he would say in this case with the science, the known, are only one part of the moral phenomenon. The other is reason, and reason may be theoretical or it may be practical reason. That is the great difficulty. And according to what Aristotle says most visibly in the sixth book -- our moral character, our properly habituated desire, makes us perceive the end, as prudence enables us to find the practical means for that end. For example, that courage is noble, and that we desire to be courageous, that we owe to our upbringing. By that we know this action in this circumstance is brave, but in other circumstances is rash or for that matter cowardly. That we are unable to see through practical wisdom. And I would say that a doctrine of moral sentiments is no plea for practical wisdom.

Student: It works very well in limited situations.

Strauss: (Inaudible.)

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle doesn't make any particular claim regarding it. He enumerates these virtues without giving a reason why he proceeds in this manner. Where does he assert it is complete? We would have to find out by studying -- is there any principle that you begin the arrangement with courage and end, at least as far as the moral virtues are concerned, with justice. Is there any reason? Aristotle doesn't give any. At least not explicitly. You will have to put twos together.

What Aristotle would say I think is this. That it is not complete, why is it not? Is anything missing? Is the quality of mercy missing? As far as it is a mere passion, he does not have a virtue regarding that. But he has his reasons . . . for example, one of the virtues well known from classical antiquity as you know from Plato is piety. Aristotle silently drops it. The task of the interpreter of Aristotle is to find out the reason of the silent dropping. There is an exactness there -- on the whole it is an ascent, the order, but this ascent is qualified by other considerations. Magnanimity which is a very high virtue in Aristotle, has to do with high honors, proceeds in this order

the right posture towards more honor, and the right posture towards more honor would simply be lower in rank than the right posture towards high honor. The reason here is that there was no mean for the latter virtue while there was a mean for the other -- magnanimity. As for the omissions, one has to find out the reasons why considering the virtue in question.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In a way they are not as important as the (inaudible) virtues of courage, understanding, moderation, proper posture towards money, posture toward honor. But on another level, one could say they are higher because they are more defined, the virtues of private social life require a higher degree of delicacy than the (inaudible). One could say that.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Next time we will begin in Book 3.

Lecture XIII
Aristotle's Ethics, March 25, 1968

Strauss: Let us use this occasion for summarizing the first two books, at least the points which are most important. Now the first thing as you remember is happiness, and we are told that virtue is the core of happiness. The virtuous man derives the highest kind of pleasure from resisting the more common kinds of pleasures and from not ceding to pain. And from this it follows that the virtuous man can never be simply miserable, the example of pride. So to come back to the main point, virtue is the core of happiness; yet, happiness in contradistinction to virtue is venerable whereas virtue is not. Happiness is the status of blessing and belongs to a higher order.

The second point I would like to remind you of is this. Moral knowledge is valuable only for action as Aristotle says. Yet it is of higher rank than the knowledge implied in the arts and, although Aristotle does not say this here yet, moral knowledge is of lower rank than theoretical knowledge, as will come out in the opening of Book 6.

In 1105a, 26 following, Aristotle speaks most clearly about the difference between the arts and the virtues. In the case of the virtues, the choice, selection, of the correct must be made for its own sake, whereas in the arts the choice, say of the right kind of leather, is ultimately made with a view to the gain or profit or whatever you call it or convenience of the artisan.

In 1107a, 8 following, Aristotle speaks of universally valid rules of action or he seems to speak of that, namely regarding murder, adultery, and so on. But these rules would all be negative rules; they wouldn't be positive rules. Now this is strange, that here we have something general or universal which seems to be of the utmost exactness. Under no circumstances, without any ifs and buts. But in other passages, like 1107a, 28 following, Aristotle says in actions the particular discourses are truer than the general ones. Is this only a somewhat loose statement abstracted from the remark about not murdering and so on, or has it to be taken very strictly.

I suggested that the solution to this difficulty has to be found by consideration of Aristotle's teaching on natural right and natural law in the fifth book of the Ethics on the one hand and in the Rhetoric on the other. Now as for the precise definition of virtue, moral virtue, it has to do with the mean with a view to us. This causes no difficulty in the example which Aristotle discusses most clearly, namely that of moderation. So that the amount of food which a man of 300 pounds demands in the prime of his age must be different from that which an old man of 100 pounds demands, and the same applies to drink and so on.

But what about the other virtues? Is it there so clear that the mean is always with a view to us? Now the principle to which he defers -- in actions we are never merely observers or spectators; we are always involved ourselves; therefore there is a relativity correct or noble to the acting human being. For example, is he healthy or weak, is he rich or poor.

A beautiful example is that given by Aristotle at the beginning of the discussion on magnanimity. A magnanimous man is a man who demands for himself high honors while deserving them. Say a man like Churchill, if he had demanded high honors for himself. But if a man has high honors for himself without deserving them, that is a deplorable case. But there is another case where a man does not demand high honors for himself and he doesn't deserve high honors. That is not a vicious man. Aristotle says he's *sōphrōn*, which in this context we couldn't translate by a modest man. A magnanimous man is not modest, according to conventional notions of modesty. But if someone has no merits and knows it and acts on it, then he is a modest man. So we see a relativity to the acting human being -- is he a man of great merit or is he not?

Now this relativity to the human being does not mean that moral knowledge, that is to say the choice of the right thing in the circumstances is so-called personal or incommunicable knowledge. Although in a sense it is so. Aristotle refers in a passage which we have read to sense perception which we may understand to mean here something like taste and feeding in modern times, tasting in contradistinction to rational discourse. But this is not Aristotle's last word.

What Aristotle has in mind is this. Every sensible man, every *phronēmos*, including Mr. A, agree that a man's circumstance like Mr. A here and now would have to act in this or this manner. Maybe no other man here living would ever have to act in this manner, but that a man's circumstance in this way has to act in this manner, all sensible men would equally admit. No relativism here.

Now one could find a difficulty in the following fact. Aristotle mentions as an example of a sensible man in the sixth book Pericles. This does not mean that he was an admirer of Pericles, but he took up a popular example in order to make clear the distinction between Pericles and his philosophic teacher, Anaxagoras, who was not sensible but wise. Now in Thucydides' history, Pericles' sensibleness is presented very powerfully especially in the statement about the war policy. Athens is going to win the war if she does not engage in expansionism during the war, and keeps her fleet (inaudible) and preserves her territory to the extent to which it is fortified by the great wall. And this was neglected after Pericles' death, and Athens was defeated.

By then there comes up another man called Alcibiades, a kinsman of Pericles, but of very different character. And Alcibiades demands the expedition to Sicily, the conquest of Sicily, and this fails, but not because it was intrinsically impossible. It would have been possible but for certain follies of the Athenian peoples, who drove out Alcibiades, and therefore (inaudible) who was not cut out for such a thing was in command in Sicily.

So here we have two sensible men, one saying no expansion during the war, and the other saying expansion during the war if properly done is perfectly feasible. What would Aristotle say to this? I am sure he could find other examples.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But his policy was sensible, according to Thucydides' presentation. Behind Alcibiades' notion there is the prospect of further conquest, even of the whole of Sicily, not only of Syracuse, so indefinite expansion, and if you state it in clear theoretical terms, universal expansion. But this policy as such is explicitly condemned by Aristotle. So we would have to look at Alcibiades' other policies to see that he is not a sensible man, whereas in the case of Pericles it makes some sense to say that he is.

Now the last point I would like to mention is this -- Aristotle has no doubt that a perfectly sensible -- sensible is the convenient English translation for the Greek word *phrōnēmos*, and for the Latin prudence. But Aristotle has no doubt that the perfectly sensible, i.e., virtuous, man is possible, which means a man who never thinks and never has cause to repent. This question came up the last time. Here we see very clearly the fundamental difference between Aristotle and the Bible and it would be unintelligent not to use moral expressions not to see this difference.

A very frequent way of speaking about this matter today is, well, Aristotle was a Greek and the Bible is non-Greek. In other words, there is a difference of two cultures -- now this will not do under any circumstances, because the claims raised by each, by Aristotle and Greek philosophy in general, and by the Bible, are "absolute." Aristotle does not say this is good for the Greeks. He seeks the human good. Now these claims must be faced. If they are not faced, we have already decided against both whether we admit it or are aware of it or not, and we have decided against them in favor of a third alternative. Most commonly, the third alternative is what we may call pluralism, namely all cultures are of equal respectability, and you can't blame Aristotle for being a Greek or Josiah for being a Jew. They can't help that, but on the other hand you cannot expect that what they demanded is in any way important for us living today. There are of course not only these two, but n cultures. Now one can call this view pluralism, but one must see that pluralism is a monism of sorts. Namely pluralism in this sense means

what is good, whether Aristotle's doctrine is right or the Biblical doctrine. We know what is good. What is good is to be of universal tolerance and to enjoy viewing the manyness of human possibilities or cultures. Then this third alternative has taken the place say of Aristotle's Ethics. That is the minimum one would have to demand, but without some moral principle, without some value system, it is impossible to say anything about matters of human importance.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: What we are trying to do here is to at least understand this particular alternative descended from Greek philosophy and more specifically in the form which was given by Aristotle. And we look at it and see what recommends it and also what speaks against it. And that this cannot be done without some enthusiasm and therefore creates the impression of 100% identification is a minor flaw, for which you'll have to forgive me. Before you make a decision, you will listen to the teacher in question and hear what he has to say.

The situation with which we are confronted today is that especially in the social sciences with which we are here concerned there is something like the denial of philosophy altogether, popularly known as positivism. And this is indeed untenable, and I think one can be sure of that. This alternative which I quote now, pluralism, is also a popular view today and of course underlying in fact positivism, but not openly avowed. Even this I believe is an untenable view. And therefore I think the alternatives on the level of Aristotle and the Bible are of quite higher dignity and of quite higher importance.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Are you referring to the fact that the Biblical teachings are meant to be believed? Are you not compelled when you are confronted, for example, the term humility is used in Aristotle only in a negative sense and the same is true of its use by Plato and Xenophon. Whereas in the Bible it is a term of high praise. But we need not be incumbent on the interpreter of the Bible to make clear that this is not a degrading view to say that humility, in Greek , lowliness, is not simply low but something very high. Is it not incumbent on that theologian to show that we, and not only we but Aristotle and Plato themselves, have some grounds for (inaudible) and therefore is it possible for theological teaching to be presented without recourse to an argument without reference to what we can know by our unassisted reason.

Student: This is part of the problem -- the only way a theologian would attempt to prove that there is something good about humility, that it is not the low thing that it might strike one to be immediately, is on the basis of the type of theoretical consideration that Aristotle would consider to be somewhat out of the way with a respect to a practical science.

Strauss: This Aristotelian self (inaudible) is not necessarily binding on the interpreter if the exclusion of theoretical knowledge would lead to distortion of the moral facts. If this would prove to be the case, then one has to (inaudible) Aristotle, and has to say we have a very high regard for you Aristotle, but you are wrong. But if you think only of the case of humility, you do not have to become a physicist or a mathematician to argue that out. You would have to discuss the question, is it possible for man to be so impeccable, so self-satisfied, as Aristotle seems to assume? And think only of the reasons for humility which are supplied by theoretical knowledge. After all, however fine Aristotle might have thought his account of the whole (inaudible), even in his lifetime but surely later on, it has become very questionable who dares to say today that the heavenly bodies are living beings -- the sun, moon, and the stars -- merely because when we look up to them they move and we don't see anything pushing them, so they have the principle of motion in themselves, but a being which has the principle of motion in itself is a living being (inaudible) a living being. And Genesis, the first chapter, knew already that -- that the stars are not gods, are not living beings.

And so, the order of the genesis, if we take the now prevailing view, that it was not some god but some human being divined here, a truth which Aristotle did not deny. In other words, a case for humility can be made against Aristotle. The same would apply to other things, for example, the chapter on magnanimity which is the anti-Biblical statement in a way in the whole Ethics. Here pride, noble pride, but pride nevertheless, is presented as the crown of all virtue. This would have to be considered. Indeed, if the term faith in contradistinction to understanding, has any meaning, it means that the acceptance of the Biblical teaching can never be possible on rational grounds alone. But this does not mean that rational grounds may not be sufficient to show the limitations of say Aristotle.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible) That Aristotle didn't prove his point. And Aristotle claims to have proved his point. The Biblical theologian does not claim to have proved his point. And therefore what Thomas shows merely it is not demonstrably false, demonstrably nonsense, and (inaudible). And so what Thomas proves is that it is possible to hold the Biblical beliefs. He cannot make the Biblical beliefs rational and therefore comparable.

Be this as it may, I hope you will agree with me that it is a very small point but not negligible point I tried to make, that it is necessary to understand the relation of Biblical morality and Aristotelian philosophic morality, so there are surely striking differences between the two. Humility I mentioned, but

I could have well as said mercy as something very laudatory. Yes?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In Plato there are some, but the point is this. In Plato we have this phenomenon of which we spoke before, regarding Aristotle. In Plato the son of which I spoke is always there and therefore the things which are peculiarly visible and attractive in moonlight are not so attractive in the cases of Plato, meaning because Socrates always (inaudible) in one way or other.

Now let me see -- who is presented as a particularly sensible man in Plato? (Inaudible) is a man who cannot continue to talk because he has talked so much already -- that's the way in which he is introduced. And (inaudible) is presented as a man who makes one blunder after another. (Inaudible) confronts him 3 times in a row with choices. He invariably picks the wrong one. And he is a teacher of prudence.

You find nice men -- I mean at first glance like (inaudible). You would say he's a sensible man.

Student: He obeyed the law.

Strauss: But if the law is terrible . . .

Student: The laws were not terrible -- the laws of Athens were reasonable laws. (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .) but the alternatives were worse than to obey the Athenian laws. I'm willing to grant you that (inaudible) is a reasonable man; all right.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: Yes, he is a young, very pleasant, very able mathematician.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Was a good citizen; yes, you could say that. So that is then granted, but we have some difficulties because there are more who are not sensible men, either because they are too young or because there is something more deeply wrong. Like (inaudible) creatures who later on became tyrants; their sensibleness could not have been too strong. So that is an interesting approach to Plato.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: After all the people who manage their households in great economic crises, they survive not only but put something aside for a rainy day -- that is quite sensible and quite common. Let us make a qualification -- there may be circumstances in which it may be so difficult to act sensibly that it is practically impossible. That people have to ultimately flip a coin which is a kind of declaration of bankruptcy.

Student: I believe last week you referred to Socrates as being the most sensible.

Strauss: That is true because here sensibility is understood in the Socratic sense of the word, and according to Socrates virtue is knowledge or *phronesis*. But this is not the common understanding.

Student: Is it Aristotle's understanding?

Strauss: No; he rejects that. For Aristotle the question of what is virtuous is beyond the interest of the perfect gentleman. For Socrates the perfect gentleman is precisely the man who devotes most of his waking time to thinking about (inaudible). Surely that is very simple.

Student: That would coincide with Plato's reflection on (inaudible), namely that he (inaudible) a theoretical man, and he didn't fulfill the promise he displayed in his youth.

Strauss: One can of course say that (inaudible) and (inaudible) are not Plato, and one would have to see how to translate that to express the view of Plato himself.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This is another matter, but if we speak of say of what a decent man, a gentleman, in the ordinary colloquial sense, there are of course quite a few, and therefore also in Plato's (inaudible). They are of course nice gentlemen, but not always successful as generals, because (inaudible) was successful from time to time.

That is true, but what Plato also does, if one reads him carefully, is to supply us with a kind of excellence. For example, (inaudible) is a perfect grandfather -- one would wish to have such a nice grandfather. If you look more closely you see there are some indelicacies which lead to a changed view of his being. When he is asked what use does he make of his money -- he says well, of course I pay my debts to gods and men because every day I may die and I want to have a good conscience. That is a very respectable motive, as far as it goes. But then the question arises, what did he use his money for when he was young? And that you have to figure out for yourself. And similar considerations apply to all men.

Let us turn now to Book 3.

Reader: "Virtue however is concerned with passions and actions. And it is only voluntary actions for which praise and blame are given; those that are involuntary are condoned and sometimes even pitied. Hence if these be necessary for the student of ethics, to define the difference between the voluntary and the involuntary, and this will also be of service to the legislator regarding rewards and punishments."

Strauss: In assigning honors and punishments. Of course he doesn't speak of students of ethics -- he says those who make considerations regarding virtue. Now why does he suddenly take up this question of the voluntary and involuntary? Now it will appear later that there is a connection with the problem of the voluntary and that of election or choice, and we have heard before that virtue is a habit of choosing, so Aristotle continues his analysis of virtue. Virtue is a habit of choosing; therefore we have to know what is choice. For some reasons not yet made clear, in order to understand choice, we have to understand voluntarism. There is one little difficulty. Voluntarism of course reminds us of the will. There is no Greek word for will and that is very strange. The word will comes from Latin, "voluntas." The Greek word means rather wish than will.

Generally speaking we can say right now that election is a species of the voluntary. Perhaps we should simply drop the word voluntary and speak of spontaneous, in order to avoid any misleading suggestions. Now virtuous actions are praiseworthy, and vicious actions are blameworthy, and therefore they are spontaneous. Non-spontaneous actions are not praiseworthy and blameworthy, with certain qualifications which Aristotle will speak of in the sequel.

This subject is necessary first for those who make investigations and secondly for the legislators. Those who make investigations, and I am speaking of investigations regarding virtue, this may very well refer to people like the students of Aristotle. Involuntary actions deserve excuse and sometimes even pity. Aristotle does not elaborate on this because he assumes that everyone knows that if you are forced, literally forced, someone forces your finger to pull a trigger by which to kill someone very dear to you, then we of course would say this man is a murderer of his nearest and dearest, but we have compassion for him. With other cases we don't go as far as that compassion; we would at least say we would excuse this action; we do not regard it as murder. The details will be explained in the sequel.

Reader: "It is then generally held that actions are involuntary under compulsion or through ignorance, and that an act is compulsory when its origin is from without and of such a matter that the agent who is really passive contributes nothing to it. For example, when he is carried somewhere by stress of weather or by people who have him in their power."

Strauss: Now the unspontaneous actions are due either to violence or to ignorance, and Aristotle speaks first about unspontaneous actions due to violence. If someone is compelled by a storm, by a hurricane, to land in the midst of the house of somebody else and by his sudden falling down kills someone, he is clearly not responsible for that, and the same is true of human beings forcing. Yes?

Reader: "But there is some doubt about actions done through the fear of a worse alternative or for some noble object, as for example a tyrant having a man's parents and children in his power commands him to do something base when if he complies their lives will be spared, but if he refuses they will be put to death. It is open to question whether such actions are spontaneous or unspontaneous. A somewhat similar case is when cargo is jettisoned in a storm. Apart from circumstances, no one voluntarily throws away his property, but to save his own life and that of his shipmates, any sane man would so do. Acts of this kind then are mixed but they approximate to the spontaneous (inaudible), for at the actual time they are done they are chosen or willed, and the end of an act varies with the occasion. So that the terms spontaneous and unspontaneous should be used with reference to the time of action. Now the actual deed is done spontaneously, for the origin of the movement of the parts of the body instrumental to the act lies in the agent. And when the origin of the action given oneself it is in one's own power to do it or not to do it. Such acts therefore are spontaneous though perhaps unspontaneous apart from circumstance, for no one would choose to do any such thing for oneself."

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .); you can even say absolutely, but what is absolutely true is not true. It is true only by virtue of an abstraction, which for a certain purpose is as useful, but the truth resides in the full action, including the (inaudible). I believe the examples are clear. In all these cases, in the case of the tyrant with the children, this has acquired a new actuality in our century; for some centuries these cases were regarded as belonging to a remote past but today this happens almost every day.

Now this gives us all kinds of questions. These are mixed, as Aristotle says, yet they are voluntary. Is the man out of fear for his wife and children betrays the most important secrets to an enemy, it is his responsibility; he has attenuating circumstances -- that's another matter, but he commits high treason. This is what Aristotle seems to say. But still this case is a mixed one. If it were merely saving his own life, there would be no question; he has to sacrifice his life. But if his nearest and dearest, especially people who cannot defend themselves are involved, the case becomes mixed.

Student: I don't understand the -- particularly what he says . . .

that it falls into the sphere of voluntary actions particularly as the origin of the actions are at the end in itself. Now it seems to me there are two ways which sort of violate what he said earlier about judging under the circumstances, for example not with a great deal of difference, but by having somebody close to the family implies that he is a close friend. But he's talking about a member of the family of your own blood, so it seems to me -- I don't see how he can say the origin of the thing is linked up personally.

Strauss: Because he had a choice; he can or cannot reveal that secret. But if . . .

Student: If the tyrant had me and said look I'll shoot you if you don't do this, I have a choice.

Strauss: All right, but the mere fact that you can deliberate if only for a minute shows -- there is a case that if the tyrant's bodyguard can compel you to pull the trigger in order to kill another enemy of his regime, then you have no choice. Your finger does it in a way, but you are the instrument of the bodyguard. In this case you decide, and you may say it goes without saying but that's not quite true, because if you would say -- then you could also take the view of Hobbes and say if you betray your country in order to save dear life, then you do not commit a crime. Because the greatest good which you have is your life. Or at least the first good which you have is your life on which all other goods depend and a man is even closer to himself than his nearest and dearest. They can easily make an argument for that.

Student: They can also make the argument, as many people have, that a person's family is nothing more than an extension of one's self. As opposed to making the argument that, well, yes I have a close friend but not to the extent that he's part of myself.

Strauss: All right, but if you are not entitled to betray your country in order to save your life, you are also entitled to betray your country in order to save your nearest and dearest. That is Aristotle's position it seems. He admits that there is a certain terrible pleasure, but a pleasure which does not care to do away with spontaneity. Yes, now let us go on.

Reader: "Sometimes indeed men are actually afraid for these of these mixed blood, namely when they submit to something shameful or painful as the price of some great and noble object. Though if they do so without any such motive they are blamed, since it is contemptible to submit to a great disgrace with no advantage or only part of one in view."

Strauss: For some mixed actions, properly done, men are even praised. For example, Socrates is compelled to be disgraced and to die and that is praiseworthy. I mean he didn't choose this

wholly on his own but he was compelled when confronted with this choice between the right and the wrong which shows it is disgraceful, because it is disgraceful to be executed.

These actions are voluntary -- Socrates' actions were voluntary. He did not wish to be confronted with that choice, but once he was confronted with it, he was confronted with a choice. As he says, he could have run away before the proceedings had come under way. Perhaps his accusers would have been very happy to get rid of him this way without the complications of a trial.

Reader: "In some cases again such submission is not praised but condoned when a man does something wrong through fear of penalty that imposes too great a strain on his nature, and that noone could endure. Yet there seem to be some acts which a man cannot be compelled to do and rather than do them, he ought to submit to the most terrible death."

Strauss: Now there are perhaps some things to which one cannot be compelled or which one ought not be compelled, but which one should rather die under the most terrible tortures. For some misactions there is not indeed praise but forgiveness. According to (inaudible) commentary, someone is threatened with being set on fire if he does not tell a jocular lie or if he does not commit acts which do not become his dignity. (Inaudible) . . . who would not tell a jocular lie, say I am six feet high and I am not six feet high, or whodoesn't so something which ordinarily only a garbage collector would do, which doesn't befit my dignity but under terrible pressure from a tyrant, and no gentleman would blame that gentleman.

But would not the question also apply to a man who reveals a very important state secret to the enemy in order to prevent the torture killing of his wife and children. We have said that before. Could not one say that is going beyond what human nature can bear. I believe it would probably be decided differently in different ages, ages in which martyrdom was demanded more as a matter of course than it is today.

"Forinstance, we think it ridiculous that Alcmaeon in Euripides' play is compelled by circumstance to murder his own mother."

Strauss: Now how was he compelled? We seem to know this, that he was compelled by his father's curses to kill his mother. In other words, if you don't kill her, I will do you terrible things. Is this the kind of pleasure (inaudible) by the tyrant? Aristotle says here again perhaps. This creates some difficulties because Aristotle sometimes uses perhaps as an elegant expression in order not to speak pedantically. (Inaudible) . . . as we would say in an argument in order to appear not too crude (inaudible . . .). But sometimes it is also meant more seriously.

Reader: "But it sometimes is difficult to decide how far we ought to go in choosing a different act rather than suffer a given penalty or in enduring a given penalty rather than committing a given action. It is still more difficult to abide by our decision when made since in most dilemmas, the penalties threatened are painful and the deed forced upon us dishonorable, which is why praise and blame are bestowed according to do or not do such compulsion."

"What kind of actions then are to be called compulsory?"

Strauss: Let us stop here. The great difficulty is to judge (inaudible) in borderline cases. It is even more difficult to act properly in borderline cases when you are exposed to the pleasure of the tyrant or whoever it may be.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: He speaks here only about violence. Can I bring it up later? Since you have brought it up, give me an example.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: What kind of knowledge would he like to gain by that? Of how human beings die? Then he should study medicine and he will go to anatomical courses. I don't see what you mean. Who do you think of?

Student: Oedipus.

Strauss: Oedipus. Oedipus doesn't -- it's entirely different. Oedipus would be acquitted by any civilized law court.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I mean that Oedipus will be miserable is beside the fact that a sensible law court would not condemn him. Therefore he is an object of compassion as Aristotle said.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But if you take the situation as it is in Socrates' Oedipus, he has been given very good advice by an authoritative man. This man tells him don't go into that, and if he is so obstinate, then he will be severely punished for that. In difficult cases, a man should obey a wiser man than oneself is.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But how do you know that (inaudible) would have taken off the curse without (inaudible). We read this all too much from our modern point of view, instead of following simple commonsensical principles, and if you mean something much deeper (inaudible . . .) this is never stated in the part of the Oedipus story told us by Socrates. This is stated as his punish-

ment for having found out the truth. So, in other words, no theoretical man has in a manner killed his father and mated with his mother. That is no longer a good subject for discussion. But it is surely something to which Aristotle has given quite a bit of thought.

Student: I wondered what Aristotle would say or perhaps he does say about the case of Alcibiades.

Strauss: He doesn't say anything. I looked it up yesterday because I wasn't sure. In the Athenian Constitution he is mentioned.

Student: But that wouldn't be a case in which a man is forced in some sense to decide . . .

Strauss: No, that is the modern view. He was confronted with a choice between returning to Athens and to submit to judicial procedures which probably would have led to capital punishment. The alternative would have been to run away to the enemy, to run away to another country. But he chose Sparta, and betrayed all the secrets of (inaudible). That was not necessary; he could have gone to some out of the way place in Sicily, and waited until the storm had blown over. Alcibiades was driven by an infinite ambition and that is no excuse. Then you can justify the most horrible crimes.

Student: Would Aristotle say that he should have gone back to Athens?

Strauss: That I do not know. Because I do not know the circumstances in which Aristotle himself left Athens. He left Athens in a hurry which we know, and the reason which he gave is that Athens should not again commit a sin against philosophy. Now whether he was already accused or whether he expected an accusation is a different story.

Student: That's a rather fine line.

Strauss: Aristotle's history has always to do with fine lines; otherwise, it is not very interesting.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I do not know; I know only the story, that he had to leave, that he left, and that he was (inaudible) threatened. Whether he was threatened with death or exile or a fine or whatnot, I do not know.

(The first half of the tape ran out at this point.)

Strauss: In other words, there are no certain rules which you can give here, but the decision must be left to the judgment of

of the wise men (inaudible. . .) who might happen to be an historian. That was formerly thought to be a function of the historian. He would supply that judgment on the actions which was perhaps not made at the time or had not come down from the time, so this is not fundamentally different from what we do in present cases, because hindsight is unfair in both cases. That is crucial. Something which could not have been known at the time, that is hindsight, (inaudible). There are difficult questions, like those of the second world war -- what was the greater danger in the long run, Hitler or Stalin, and the conversation in a way has gone up to the present day, and where Churchill who had something to do with the decision said you can make only one link in the chain of destiny -- at this moment in 1941 and 1942 the greater danger was Hitler. There was still some hope, however dim, that Stalin might (inaudible. . .) and this proved to be an error.

Reader: "To apply the term compulsory to acts done for the sake of pleasure what were noble objects on the plea that these exercises (inaudible) from without is to make every action compulsory. For pleasure and nobility between them supply the motive of all actions whatsoever; also, to act under compulsion and unwillingly is painful, but acts done for their pleasantness or nobility are done with pleasure, and also it is absurd to blame external things instead of ourselves for falling an easy prey to their affection, or to take the credit of our noble deeds to ourselves, while putting the blame for our disgraceful ones upon the temptations of pleasure. It appears indeed that an act is compulsory when its origin is from outside, the person compelled contributing nothing to it."

Strauss: This is the conclusion of the first part of the discussion on spontaneous and non-spontaneous, and the point which he makes is that in the case of the non-spontaneous due to compulsion or violence, the cause is outside of us -- the simple case (inaudible. . .) pulling the trigger.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle seems to be rather tough in his judgment and Thomas Aquinas even a bit more, if one can make that distinction. I think we would say, whether this is due to our greater humanity or to a greater softness on our part, it's a rather difficult question, but we would be inclined today toward the other side. Something done under torture beyond human endurance (inaudible). We would hesitate to pronounce easy judgment if we had not been ourselves in that situation. Although that is not perhaps a sufficient reason for judging other men, particularly tough, and therefore regard as titillation what others regard as torture (inaudible.).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Now let me see. I am not sure whether I understood you. The point which he makes first is that violence is outside of us, and someone could say but the pleasant and the noble are outside of us. Take a simple case -- the apple -- which attracts. Or the wreath given to a victor in the game. And Aristotle says of course, if these are understood to be outside things, and therefore their influence is toward violence, then all human actions would be violent, and we would not have any responsibility for anything we are doing. But people would then contradict themselves, because they would say -- if they are noble deeds, they would say "I did it", but if they are disgraceful deeds, then they would say "It's not my fault; it was that outside influence."

Aristotle says that noble things are done with pleasure; I'm sorry -- that pleasant things are done with pleasure. This is done with pleasure, and therefore spontaneously. Whereas it is not sufficient, but a necessary criterion for the violent, that it is done with pain.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the point is, does this take away from the voluntarism of the action?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There is surely a most important difference between Aristotle and Kant, but to what extent does it come up here? Kant would of course say that if someone causes you to pull your finger to pull the trigger, that's not your action. There would be no difference between Aristotle and Kant in this respect. You can say that the pleasant and noble things are outside and exert a pleasure on you and therefore you have no responsibility for giving in or not giving in. The difference between Aristotle and Kant does not come in in this elementary consideration.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But Aristotle does not assume that the moral things, to use a Kantian term, are done for the sake of pleasure; they are done for the sake of the intrinsic morality, but the question is, why ought we to do the noble things for their own sake -- there is the difference. Aristotle does not refer to moral law, but to what Aristotle refers is one of the most difficult questions in ethics. The intrinsic nobility is in most cases there. But Kant analyzes this intrinsic nobility in terms of a moral law which is not deducible or derivable from anything we know at all. Aristotle does not do such.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Since all men do everything they do for the sake of happiness, that is no explanation. The difference is that the

noble man does the noble things with a view to his happiness and the ignoble does the ignoble things with a view to his happiness. They have different understandings of happiness.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is not Aristotle's view of the situation. For Aristotle this intrinsic nobility of the action is the core of happiness, and therefore happiness does not appear as an independent notion.

Now generally speaking, and I think I have said this before on a former occasion, the fundamental difference methodically between Kant and Aristotle is this. Now let us see here the man, and here is the thing at which he aims, say the action. The good action, the noble or just action, must have no motive other than the intrinsic goodness of the action, and this is (inaudible) by nobility of action. In this respect there is no difference between Aristotle and Kant. One can say that a moral teaching which denies that doesn't come up to the minimum of a moral teaching, but that is my impression.

And now there is something else. Let us call this the actor's view, and let us put here an A, as a symbol for actor. But then there is another point of view, namely the point of view of a man who looks at A and his actions from without, and let us call him the spectator. Now he will take in quite a few things here, say the prehistory of the action. Now Aristotle, in contradistinction to Kant, has also this point of view and regards it perhaps as the superior point of view. Kant is of course familiar with the fact that you can look at an action and analyze it purely theoretically, for example, you find a certain density of divorces or murder in certain districts in certain years -- this well-known theme of research -- and then you try to find out the efficient and material causes of that, whether that is misery or poverty or what. For Kant, this kind of investigation however important technically, is inferior in dignity, to this, to the moral judgment. Whereas for Aristotle it seems that the theoretical understanding is ultimately of higher rank than the moral understanding. That is an important difference. This is connected with the fact that in Kant's moral philosophy proper, nature plays no role, while in Aristotle's moral doctrine, nature does play a great role. In other words, for Kant morality must consist in a freedom from nature -- freedom from nature. For Aristotle there is no such freedom from nature, but precisely in acting well, human nature comes into its own.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But as to the point with which are today concerned, there is no difference between Aristotle and Kant in this.

Now I think we have now reached the part where he turns to ignorance. My wish is to discuss the next time both ignorance and then the next great subject, election or choice. Now I think

we should read here 1115a which is the end of the general discussion of virtue and then make a big jump to Book V, the book on justice. However wonderful the parts which we omit are, we have to omit them, and I urge you especially read if not all Books III and IV, at least the Book IV section on magnanimity.

Lecture XIV
Aristotle's Ethics, March 27, 1968

Strauss: This approach starts from the fact that it presupposes the deadness of nature, and you cannot deduce goodness from nature because you don't know the (inaudible), and even if you do, goodness is something different from nature itself.

There is another remark of Kant which is important and crucial in this connection, and that is that the moral doctrine must liberate man from being tied to the apron strings of nature. Now if man's goodness consists in properly satisfying his natural inclinations, then his ends are not freely posited by man but imposed on him although agreed to by him. Therefore Kant's work is one of the great milestones on the way towards man's liberation, and all we think today of a conquest of nature or other notions connected with that with the rule of man, with man's being radically free, all this has very much to do with Kant and prepared by others, but Kant went very much beyond his predecessors.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But that means only that some agreement has to be found between theoretical and practical reason. The links are supplied by the teleology as well as by necessity, but as far teleology is concerned, which is more immediately relevant, this never takes on theoretical dignity. Never. Kant is sure that there will never be a Newton of the Plato class, that there will never be an explanation of living things, but on the other hand, in our teleological work, we have to think in terms ultimately of only physical or chemical explanations. That is Kant's point.

What we know, what we have on the one side, is that of modern science, and on the other hand, the moral law. And everything else -- there is no knowledge beyond that. There are intimations as it were but no knowledge.

So I think the difference between Kant and Aristotle is absolutely fundamental, and I'm sure it was not your intention to deny that.

Now let us turn to the third book of the Ethics, especially the section on the spontaneous and non-spontaneous. What Aristotle means by this you can easily see. If you take a dog out on a leash, either he drags you or you drag him. When he drags you he is acting spontaneously and you are under some compulsion; but if you drag him, you act spontaneously and the dog is under some compulsion. Is this clear?

Now this is the starting point of the analysis of what would later have been called the will but this is still subhuman in itself, although as we will see, what Aristotle has to say about

spontaneity and non-spontaneity, it is colored by the specifically human. Obviously, if spontaneity is rendered impossible, by compulsion not only as we have seen last time, but also by ignorance, then this latter kind of lack of spontaneity is a specifically human lack of spontaneity. Spontaneity . . . ignorance would not affect the spontaneity of a (inaudible).

Now we continue in 1110b, 18 to 24.

Reader: "Everything that is done by reason of ignorance is not voluntary; it is only what produces pain and repentance that is involuntary or not spontaneous. For the man who has done something owing to ignorance and feels not the least vexation of his actions has not acted voluntarily, since he did not know what he was doing, yet involuntarily, since he is not pained. People then who act by reason of ignorance, he who repents is thought an involuntary agent, and the man who does not repent since he is different, be called a not voluntary agent. For, since it differs from the other, it is better that he should have a name of his own."

Strauss: Think of Oedipus killing his father and mating with his mother. He did this in ignorance, and the sign that he did it ignorantly is that he was pained after he became aware of it and had regret as soon as he came to know what he "did."

Reader: "Acting by reason of ignorance seems also to be different from acting in ignorance. A man who is drunk or in a rage is thought to act not of ignorance but of one of the causes mentioned, yet not knowingly but in ignorance."

Strauss: This is a subtle distinction which is important for penal law. If Oedipus had done the terrible things he did while he was drunk, one could not say he did it out of ignorance, but because he was drunk. There is a different emphasis. The man who does something from being drunk or from being angry does not do it through ignorance. He does not know, as Aristotle puts it, yet he is in ignorance. I think the penal law would treat differently a man who does something from ignorance, for example from thinking it is his car whereas it is the car of somebody else that's very similar. And a man who does something because he is drunk is held responsible for his being drunk, but he cannot be held responsible for inevitable or practically inevitable ignorance. This will become clear as we go.

Reader: "Now every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought to do and what he ought to abstain from. It is by reason of error of this kind that men become unjust and in general bad. But the term not spontaneous tends to be used not if a man is ignorant of what is to his advantage for it is not mistaken purpose that causes spontaneous actions, but rather the wickedness. The ignorance of the universal -- for that men are blamed, but ignorance of particulars, that is of the circumstances of the action and the objects with which it is concerned, for it is from these that both pity and pardon depend, for a person

who is ignorant of any of these acts unspontaneously."

Strauss: What Aristotle says here in a way is that all badness is through ignorance, as Socrates had said before him. Meaning through ignorance of the things useful to him, and that is here a somewhat loose expression which includes also the noble, and at any rate it means the universals involved. For example, if someone commits a murder and says I did not know that murder is bad, this is not an excuse. But ignorance regarding particulars in the situation, for example he did not know that a man was standing there where he fired his pistol or whatever it may be. This kind of ignorance may be an excuse.

The ignorance which is unexcusable is that which is due to badness, or identical with badness. That one does not know the most elementary distinctions between right and wrong. Morality presupposes some knowledge, although the knowledge is not the main point here. Knowing that a murder is bad is very little if you murder nevertheless. But this knowledge which morality presupposes must be available to all if morality is to be expected from all. Therefore it is knowledge of universals, like murder and adultery. The bad man does not know this. He regards these actions as advantageous to him. This is the reason why Aristotle uses here the term advantageous. He thinks it's good for me; he doesn't think that it is base. He doesn't even know that, in the classic case.

But Aristotle says that that man does not know it through his fault. He does not listen to what his elders and betters told him, or more practically and crudely stated, the knowledge of these simple universals is supplied to all men by the law. In all countries the law says something to this effect. While it is true that the law makes distinctions between the killing of a free man or a slave, that causes a complication which is not negligible, but the main point is then by law everything.

Reader: "Perhaps it is just as well therefore to determine their nature and number. A man may be ignorant then of who he is, what he is doing, and whom or what he is acting on, and sometimes also what instrument is he doing it with, and to what end, for example, he may think his act will conduce to someone's safety, and how is he doing it, for example, gently or violently."

"Now of all these no one could be ignorant unless he was mad as is evidently also he could not be ignorant of the agent since he does not know himself."

Strauss: So in other words, that is the least interesting case, I mean that he has amnesia, a theme very popular now in unpopular cultures. Yes?

Reader: "But of what he is doing a man might be ignorant, as for instance, people say it slipped out of their mouth as they were speaking, or they did not know it was a secret, as Aeschylus said."

Strauss: Aeschylus claimed to not know that it was forbidden to divulge the missile, and if he did not know he was not guilty. Because this does not belong to the things which all men are supposed to know. Only the initiated should know that. By definition. Yes?

Reader: "Or a man might say, he let it go off when he really wanted to kill his workmen, as the man did with the catapult."

Strauss: Today we would take it as a very common case.

Reader: "One might think one's son was an enemy, as Merope did, or that a pointed spear had a button on it, or that the stone was pumice stone, or one might give a man a drab to save him, and really kill him, or one might want to touch a man, like people do in sparring, and really wound him."

"The circumstance may relate then to any of these things, that is, of the circumstances of the action. A man who is ignorant of any of these is thought to have acted involuntarily, especially if he was ignorant on the most important points, and these are thought to be the circumstances of the action. Further, the doing of an act that is called involuntary in virtue of ignorance or discourse must be painful and is called repentant."

Strauss: This he repeats again, because that is a kind of criterion that a man did it involuntarily after having become aware of what he did and so on.

Now circumstances are here discussed. The circumstances are conditions of the human act. These conditions are either from the sides of the causes of the act or from the side of the act itself. And this is the way in which Thomas Aquinas explains it. Now from the side of the causes of the act, it could be an efficient cause or the final cause. And the efficient cause could be the principle cause or an instrumental cause. For example, the error regarding the stone, that could be an error regarding the instrumental cause. For the end, which means ignorance of the end which follows from his actions, as distinguished from the end intended by them. A physician who gives a pill intending to save a patient, but in this particular case the pill proves to be fatal. Now as regards the circumstance on the part of the act itself, there is first to consider the genus to which the act belongs, that is to say what the act is.

Now the case of Aeschylus -- he thought it was a harmless thing to mention the (inaudible) in the Mysteries and it was not -- it was something forbidden. And then the matter of the object of the act itself. For example that he thought the woman was his wife and it was another woman. But he was justified, because the woman was found in the nighttime without lights, this woman in his wife's bed.

And finally the mode of the action, and that is whether it is with violence or (inaudible), for example, if a man wants to

push a man around a bit and he does it a bit too strongly, and the other man dies by some unfortunate coincidence, but this is also ignorance, because it does not have the intention of pushing him hard.

Now it is clear that the things universally bad, of which Aristotle has spoken before, like murder and so on, are bad only if they are done knowingly and intentionally. And this is the difference between human actions, morally valid actions, and other bad things like food, for example bad food has its bad effects regardless of whether you take it knowingly or unknowingly. Intentionally or non-intentionally.

So now Aristotle has reached a point where he can suggest a definition of voluntary or spontaneous, which he does in the immediate sequel.

Reader: "Since that which is done under compulsion or by reason of ignorance is not spontaneous, the spontaneous would be that which the moving principle is the agent itself, keenly aware of the particular circumstances of the action."

"Presumably acts done by reason of anger or appetite are non-spontaneous."

Strauss: The two terms used by Aristotle are those used by Plato in the Republic, and , usually translated spiritedness and desire.

Here Aristotle speaks of an error -- there are some people who say actions committed from anger and from desire are non-spontaneous, because these affections themselves, spiritedness and desire, are involuntary. But Aristotle rejects this view for a number of reasons.

Reader: "For in the first place, on that showing, none of the other animals will act spontaneously, nor will children, and secondly, is it meant that we do not spontaneously do any of the acts that are due to appetite or anger? Or that we do the noble acts spontaneously and the base acts unspontaneously? Is not this absurd when one and the same thing is the cause? But it would surely be odd to describe as not spontaneous the things one ought to desire, and we ought both to be angry at certain things and to have an appetite for certain things. For example, for health and for learning. Also, what is non-spontaneous is thought to be painful, but what is in accordance with appetite is pleasant."

Strauss: Aristotle gives here two arguments. If what we do from anger and desire are involuntary, that would make all actions of brutes and children involuntary, and this does not correspond to what we think and see. For example, we see the difference between what the puppy dog voluntarily, spontaneously, and what one does under compulsion. Secondly, what we do from desire or anger is spontaneous. For instance, we desire the right

things in the right circumstances and then we act well and get credit for it. The argument which Aristotle rejects would lead to the consequence that we reclaim responsibility for our good actions and disclaim responsibility for our bad actions. If we act nicely, we say well of course I did it. But if we do something bad, we say well something else did it, not we. In other words, if this view were correct, all actions prompted by desire and spiritedness would be good or at least excusable. Contrary to the universal view of mankind.

And what he says at the end of this sections means I think that the most one can say is that the things which are done through anger are involuntary, and the things done out of desire are pleasant and hence voluntary. But of course even regarding anger, Aristotle does not agree that they are voluntary.

And he gives now a third argument.

Reader: "And again what is the difference in respect of involuntaryness in respect to errors committed upon calculation and errors committed in anger. Most are to be avoided, and the irrational passions are thought not less human than reasoning and therefore also the acts which proceed from anger or appetite are the man's actions. It would be odd then to treat them as not spontaneous."

Strauss: If actions from anger or spiritedness are involuntary, why not also actions from calculation? All human actions which have their origin in a mature human being are voluntary. This is the point of Aristotle.

Why all such human actions are voluntary, not all voluntary actions are human; there are also voluntary actions of beasts. There is here a certain obscurity to which I referred before. Voluntariness or spontaneous is common to all animals, but Aristotle speaks in fact of the specifically human voluntary and involuntary actions, for example especially when he speaks of those done through ignorance.

The reason why Aristotle is concerned with it is this. A human act may be spontaneous but not deliberately chosen. That is the practical importance of this discussion. Think of the difference between premeditated murder and homicide in anger and then a wholly guiltless killing (inaudible) ignorance. We must make this distinction. This distinction between voluntariness on the one hand, and premeditation (or what Aristotle will call election or choice, is of crucial importance.

Incidentally, those of you who are interested in this subject should read Plato's Laws, 860c to 864a. This is of special importance because Plato argues there on the basis of the Socratic premise that all evil is due to ignorance, and therefore there cannot be the distinction which Aristotle makes.

The Athenian stranger can accept this contradiction only in a kind of adaptation to what the laws generally prescribe, making a distinction between bad actions deliberately done and bad actions spontaneously done, and bad actions done under sheer compulsion.

Student: Doesn't Aristotle also agree that no man would willingly choose the (inaudible)?

Strauss: Yes, Aristotle would admit that.

Student: And therefore if a man doessomething (inaudible) . . . ?

Strauss: Aristotle is in agreement with Socrates despite the (inaudible), as we see especially from the seventh book where the discussion of continence and incontinence. The fact which for us is so easy, that someone says that he approves of the better course, but in fact he follows the worst course -- that is a problem for Aristotle. How is this compatible with his knowing the better course? And Aristotle says without some obfuscation.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But isn't it obfuscation of the intellect which takes place?

Student: Passions are (inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, but the key point is that we are inclined to think of criminals as wicked men who have perfect clarity and full knowledge of what they are doing, and yet some evilness overpowers them. And this is denied by Aristotle, too. Even if they know it, there must be some obfuscation taking place, otherwise they couldn't do it.

Now we have reached the conclusion on the section on the spontaneous and non-spontaneous, and to repeat the main point -- spontaneity is destroyed for the time being by compulsion and by ignorance. Ignorance meaning ignorance of relevant circumstances, not of the fundamental law itself.

Now let's go on.

Reader: "Both the spontaneous and the unspontaneous having been delimited, we must next discuss choice, for it is thought to be most closely bound up with virtue and to discriminate character better than actions do."

Strauss: Yes, let us stop here. Now Aristotle at the beginning of this book, as you will have seen, has not given us a sufficient reason why he speaks of the unspontaneous and spontaneous. Here he gives a precise reason. Choice is of the utmost importance.

It is the core of virtue. For there may be good external actions proceeding from bad choices, for example if someone does something good out of vain glory or out of calculation, and bad external actions or bad omissions may be based on good choices, for example, if someone is unable to do the right thing because he is paralyzed in his body.

In order to understand this section as well as what precedes it, we must always remember the fact that there is no Greek word, surely no Aristotelian word, for will. What we would call will is called by Aristotle choice, and this is not a faculty of the soul but it is (inaudible). The faculty is something like a (inaudible). Yes?

Reader: "Choice then seems to be spontaneous but not the same thing as (inaudible) spontaneous; the latter extends more widely. For both children and the lower animals share in spontaneous actions but not in choice. Acts done on the spur of the moment can be described as spontaneous, but not as chosen."

Strauss: Here he makes clear why he had discussed first the spontaneous. In technical language the spontaneous is the genus of which the objects of choice are a species. Every choice is spontaneous, but not every spontaneous act is a choice. He gives two examples, first the animals, which have spontaneity but no choice, and secondly, the things which we do all of a sudden which are spontaneous or may be spontaneous and are spontaneous, and yet not acts of choice. He will explain in the sequel what choice is.

Reader: "Those who say it is appetite or anger or will . . ."

Strauss: Namely choice.

Reader: "Or a kind of opinion do not seem to be right. For choice is not common to irrational creatures as well."

Strauss: So this is the theme for the discussion. In order to make clear what choice is, Aristotle shows in the sequel that it is neither desire nor anger nor wish nor opinion, and by excluding the alternatives he will find out what choice is. So begin again -- "choice is not common to the irrational animals."

Reader: "but appetite and anger are. Again, the incognizant man acts with appetite, but not with choice, while the cognizant man on the contrary acts with choice. Again, appetite is contrary to choice, but not appetite to appetite. Again, appetite relates to the pleasant and the painful -- choice neither to the painful nor to the pleasant. Still less is it anger for acts due to anger are thought to be less than any other objects of choice."

Strauss: Now the first reason we have already discussed. The second is this -- the case of the continent and incontinent man. Now the continent man differs from the moderate man in

that the moderate man does not have the desire for excess or defect regarding pains and pleasures. The continent man has desire for it but controls himself. The incontinent man is the man who knows he should not drink this other bottle of whiskey; he knows it, but he is unable to control it. (Inaudible) the argument does not make sense.

In this case it becomes very clear that the choice and the desire are very different things. Do you see that? In the case of the continent man, he chooses not to eat this additional steak, but he desires it, and in the case of the incontinent man, his choice is not to eat that other steak, but his desire is clearly for that.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .); he should have chosen more food.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible) . . . an accident, but in the case of the good men, they agree. They are made to agree by proper breeding and by proper principles.

Student: What about passions?

Strauss: If you call them passions, but passions are properly controlled.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: One can say, if this is not disrespectful, and I have said it in other cities and have repeated it in southern California as well, that one of the great harms of Aristotle, disregarding entirely the relation of truth or untruth, but what attracts some people, many people, to Aristotle is something which is very attractive in a famous English writer, and that is Jane Austen. There is a very great sense of propriety in both cases and I know that this is not the passion today, but still I must own that this is a very fine thing. There are so many sentences in Miss Austen's discussions about whether A should marry B or not. which when you state it bawdily in theoretical terms, this can be matched by sentences from the Ethics. There is only one difference which I must note -- for Aristotle -- or for Jane Austen, to marry a woman or for a woman to marry a man without loving him or her is plainly immoral. For Aristotle that is not true. For Aristotle the proper relation is that the groom should be 37 and the bride 17 and this is to be arranged by prudent people, namely the parents, and the love will come after marriage, and it is not to be a condition of marriage.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle speaks in a more pedestrian manner of a striving for knowledge and of course also other strivings.

Strivings for food and for procreation and so on. Now this poetic quality of the (inaudible) speaking externally in Plato is not in the foreground in Aristotle. There is no question.

He seems to say something very strange in the passages which we read -- desire contradicts the choice, but desire doesn't contradict desire. This seems to be sheer nonsense. We all know that we can have contradictory desires -- say a desire for money and then a desire for education and they can easily conflict, if he cannot get this money in an honorable manner.

But I think this refers still to the question of the continent and incontinent man. Most choose what is contrary to their desires, but there is no conflict in them between desire. The desire goes in both cases. The continent as well as the incontinent (inaudible) wisdom.

And now the other point he makes here is that desire goes with the pleasant, but choice as choice goes to the good or to the noble. As for spiritedness or anger in particular, what we do from anger is different from what we do from choice. This is at any rate the accepted opinion on the subject. Remember what we said before on the suddenness of anger and choice is not sudden but follows deliberation.

So let's go on here.

Reader: "But neither is this, that is choice, wish, though it seems near to it. For choice cannot relate to impossible things, and if anyone said he chose them, he would be thought silly. But there may be a wish even for impossible things, for example for immortality."

Strauss: Immortality means here not (inaudible . . .), but (inaudible), which is admittedly absurd even on the premise of immortality of the soul.

Reader: "Wishing can relate to things that can in no way be brought about by one's own efforts, for example, that a particular actor or actress should win in a competition. But no one chooses such things, but only the things that he thinks could be brought about by his own actions. Again wishing relates rather to the end rather than the means, for instance, we wish to be healthy and choose the act which will make us healthy. We wish to be happy and say we do, but we cannot well say we choose to be so. For in general choice relates to the things which are within our own power."

Strauss: Now this I think is a clear statement but I will emphasize here only one. We have discussed the relation of happiness and virtue before in the first book and here we hear something which was not said before, which is very important regarding the radical difference between happiness and virtue. Happiness is an object of wish, not of choice, because happiness

does not depend on us, and therefore Aristotle called it worthy of reverence because it is a blessing, and by a blessing we understand something we have not earned or gained by our own efforts.

Virtue, on the other hand, has to do with the things relating to the end, not to the end itself. That is hard to see, or is it not so hard? This is a more general statement. Something may be an end within a certain horizon and yet a means in a larger horizon. Say the shoemaker in his workshop completely dedicated to his shop -- for him the shoes would be the end. Perhaps also the money which he gets from them, but let us assume the shoes. If we take a somewhat wider perspective, then we see immediately the shoes are only means for the good condition of the feet, or more generally stated, for the good condition of the body. And it could be within a certain perspective virtue is the end and it would not be the end from a larger perspective.

But this is not the answer. It does not say here that virtue is not the end. Aristotle says virtue has to do with the means, and the reason is this. Virtue is the habit of properly choosing or properly preferring, and what we choose or prefer are means and not the end, and the argument of Aristotle is very simple as you have seen partly and will see. The physician takes the end for granted -- health -- he doesn't deliberate about that. But he deliberates about how he can make a given patient healthy.

Generally speaking, and we will have to repeat this point later on, choosing, preferring, is not limited to moral things. Preference is also in the arts, as is indicated by the example of the musician.

Student: If virtue is the habit of properly choosing, properly preferring, and choice is conscious preference, then what must be trained in order for the habit to occur is not just that faculty in man which can wish or prefer, but that faculty in man (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: You cannot separate but you must distinguish. Secondly, there is a difference between what intellectual virtue without which there cannot be moral virtue, and that is what Aristotle calls *promises*, in Latin *prudentia*, practicalism, and the other intellectual virtues. *Sophia*, *epistēmē*, wisdom, science, is not required for morality.

Student: But you cannot have moral virtue without some intellectual virtue.

Strauss: Practical wisdom. You do not need theoretical wisdom.

Student: I can imagine a morally significant choice having more of a moral significance than one having more of an intellectual significance. For each one of these things, the intellectual

virtue could be more or less important.

Strauss: Intellectual virtue is too broad a term; you should speak of practical wisdom, because that according to Aristotle is the only intellectual virtue which is essential to morality. The others are not essential. Nor is moral virtue essential to the other theoretical virtues.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Practical questions are questions which take place within a limited horizon from Aristotle's point of view. Namely, as Aristotle will say later on, the Spartans do not deliberate about what institutions are good for the (inaudible). That is their business. So you remain within your own horizon. You do not deliberate about how I will make my tax bill on April 15th. It's my business.

But the theoretical questions do not have in this sense the horizon.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The difference is this -- that Socrates or Plato, in contradistinction to Aristotle, call the promising philosophy practicalism or prudence. So it seems to be that for Socrates' Plato, the whole, all knowledge, if it is not merely technical and known to the arts, and the arts are always depending on a higher tribunal, who makes the distinction between the shoemaker and the beautician, telling us that the shoemaker is really an artisan whereas the beautician is not -- that's again done by practical reasons. So everything is under the control of practical wisdom. But why is that. Then we come to such things as are universally practiced, like murder, mentioned by Aristotle before. Then Socrates says, well, (inaudible), justice is good, taken for granted, and Socrates in the Republic for example discussing at great length the question whether justice is truly good. So for Socrates' Plato, the practical questions shift (inaudible) into what Aristotle would call, and perhaps Plato too -- let us leave that open -- theoretical wisdom, whereas Aristotle says the practical sphere has a limit or a horizon of its own, and the difficulty to which I referred on an earlier occasion, that it is necessary, in fact at all times, to defend sound practice against wrong theory, that this does not constitute a dependence on practice on theory but is extraneous. So a man refuting Marxist doctrines for example has a theoretical job, there's no doubt about it, and it has to be because the Marxist doctrine is a theoretical doctrine. It is complicated but is nevertheless to some extent a theoretical doctrine. But by this he does not give guidance to action. He never does that. He takes away a delusion. The guidance for action must come from the principles of action themselves.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In Aristotle there is no right theory. You find more of theory in this sense in the Politics perhaps than the Ethics. That would require a very complicated work of interpretation which to my knowledge has never been done, to lay bare the theoretical premises of the Ethics, not those which are simply taken over by a psychologist, but the theoretical principles (inaudible).

Now let's go on. The difference between choice and the other things has been made, and now he will show the difference between choice and opinion. In b, 30.

Reader: "For this reason too choice cannot be opinion. For opinion is what relates to all kinds of things, eternal things and impossible things as well as things in our own power."

Strauss: That is clear. So opinion is by its own nature universal. We opine or can opine about everything. We cannot make choices in every respect, but only in things within our reach and so on.

Reader: "And opinion is distinguished by its falsity or truth, not by its badness or goodness, and choice is distinguished rather by these."

"Now with opinion in general, perhaps noone says it is even identical."

Strauss: This is not the issue. Choice and opinion can be identified. But the question is whether choice is not an opinion on certain subjects, and that is the question which Aristotle discusses in the sequel.

Reader: "But it is not identical even with any kind of opinion. For by choosing what is good and bad, we are men of a certain character, but we are not by holding certain opinions. We choose to get or avoid something good or bad, but we have opinions about what a thing is, or whom it is good for, or how it is good for him. We can hardly be said to opine to get or avoid anything. And choice is praised for being related to the right objects rather than for being rightly related to it, opinions for being truly related to it. And we choose what we best know to be good but we opine that we do not quite know. And it is not the same people that are thought to make the best choices and to have the best opinions, but some are thought to have fairly good opinions but by reason of vice to choose what they should not."

Strauss: Let us stop here one moment. We are called good and bad not because of our opinions but because of our choices. Now this seems to be too sweetened, because we sometimes say a man is a bad man because of the things he did. Think of Machiavelli; people do not usually refer to his actions, but to his opinions, and therefore he is a bad man.

Let us therefore say we are called good or bad less because of our opinions than because of our choices. For example, someone

might derive pleasure from bothering people with a shocking opinion. We would no longer say he is a bad man, but we would say he is an ill-mannered man. Never forget that expressing one's opinion, i.e., speaking, is an action. Aristotle does not speak here of speaking, but of opining.

Now choice goes towards taking or leaving. Opinion is opinion even on good or bad things. And this does not culminate in taking or leaving. What Aristotle has here in mind is not the present-day distinction between facts and values, or factual and value judgments. Both fact judgments and value judgments are opinions of course, in Aristotle's view. For instance, this is a beautiful painting, this is a desirable apple -- these are all opinions. Because they in themselves do not mean that you give yourself as it were the command to have it; only when you do that is it a choice. Now choice goes toward what is correct. Opinion goes toward what is true. He has already spoken of that before.

There is another point -- and we choose what we are most certain of to the highest degree. But we opine also about things of which we know nothing. So choice is essentially certain; opinion is not essentially certain. Most of our opinions are quite uncertain. This subject will be taken up by Aristotle later on. I refer you now to 1139b, 15-18.

Choice is the core of action, and yet the good choice is that in spite of the many uncertainties regarding the event, that has nothing to do with that. If I make a good choice, a proper choice, then I have full certainty regarding the goodness of the action. Not regarding the event -- the event may be terrible. But that no one can foresee. Unless the event can be foreseen at the time, then I am of course responsible.

Now the fact that this moral choice should be so certain seems to be incompatible with the instability of all human things. The solution to this difficulty is this. The moral truth resides in the individual case. I think that is all I have to say on this point. Let us read the end of the section.

Reader: "If opinions precede choice or accompany them, that makes no difference, for it is not this that we are considering, but whether it is identical with some kind of opinion."

"What then, and what kind of thing is it, since it is none of the things we have mentioned. It seems to be spontaneous, but not all that is spontaneous can be an object of choice. Is it then what has been decided upon by previous deliberation. At any rate, choice involves a rational principle and thought. Even the name seems to suggest that it is what is chosen before other things."

Strauss: In Greek, *proairesis*, and *pro* means before. The main point he makes is object of choice is that spontaneous thing which must be deliberated upon before, and therefore the next

subject is, if you want to understand choice, deliberation. We can choose only such things as are properly subject to deliberation. And therefore deliberation is prior to choice, choice being the final act of deliberation. We have now to investigate deliberation.

Now as to what Aristotle says here at the beginning of the passage whether opinion precedes choice or accompanies it, Thomas Aquinas makes this distinction. As such, opinion precedes election, meaning you cannot possibly elect, choose, if you don't have some opinion about the goodness or badness of the things you choose. But accidentally, the opposite may be true. For example when a man changes his opinion as a consequence of his affection -- say he falls in love with a girl, he falls in love with her, and this is not something deliberately induced by him, and it changes his opinions about that girl.

Now let us then turn to his analysis of deliberation. Again I remind you of the fact that Aristotle speaks here about choice and deliberation in order to make us understand morality. But the phenomenon of choice and deliberation go beyond the sphere of morality, namely an event then can do the act.

Reader: "Do we deliberate about everything? And is everything a possible subject of deliberation? Or is deliberation impossible about some things? We ought presumably to call, not but a fool or madman would deliberate about, but what a sensible man would deliberate about."

Strauss: That is a commonsensical exclusion, because there may be certain kinds of madmen who deliberate, and this is not interesting in the normal case of deliberation and therefore we may excuse it.

Reader: "Now about eternal things, noone deliberates, for example about the material universe"

Strauss: Material is a terrible word. I would not translate it about (inaudible) things, but about (inaudible) things noone deliberates. The cosmos. What shall I do with the cosmos?

Reader: "Or the incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of the square."

Strauss: One cannot change that.

Reader: "But no more do we deliberate about the things that involve movement but always happen in the same way, whether of necessity, or by nature, or from any other cause, for example the solstices and the rising of the stars. Nor about things that happen now in one way and now in another way. For example drought and rain, nor about chance events, such as finding a treasure. For we do not deliberate even about all human affairs."

Strauss: Human must be emphasized. These things are all specifically human.

Reader: "For instance, no spartan deliberates about the best constitution for the Scythians. For none of these things can be brought about by our own actions."

Strauss: So we deliberate only about human things. Human things mean something very different from human nature, because we can't deliberate about human nature either, but about things subject to human action. We may say, in order to explain things a bit better, that deliberating presupposes caring. If we don't care, sometimes we don't care very deeply, but if you don't to some degree care, you don't deliberate.

Reader: "We deliberate about things that are within our power and can be done and these are in fact what is left. For nature, necessity and change are thought to be causes and also believing that everything depends on man. Now every class of men deliberate about the things that can be done by their own actions."

Strauss: So human deliberation as such is different of course from what is subject to deliberation by this particular man. Now when he speaks here about nature and necessity, he may mean by nature form, and by necessity matter. Now go on.

Reader: "And in the case of exact and self-contained sciences there is no deliberation, for example, about the letters of the alphabet, for we have no doubt about how they are to be written. But the things that are brought about by our own efforts, but not always in the same way, are the things about which we deliberate, for example, questions of medical treatment or money-making. And we do so more in the case of the art of navigation than in the case of gymnastics, inasmuch as it has been less exactly worked out and again about other things in the same ratio. And more also in the case of the arts than in that of the sciences."

Strauss: So there is then deliberation in those arts which are not exact. For example in reading and writing, we do not deliberate -- either we know how to write or we don't, and even the children who are learning do not strictly speaking deliberate about whether this should be an o or a y.

He mentions here the art of money making, and there is a great uncertainty in this -- read any daily paper -- and therefore a need for deliberation.

Aristotle does not mention the economic or political art here as we see, and we may very well wonder why not, because deliberation is there -- surely it is at the center according to the political doctrine of Aristotle -- the function of the ruling body is to deliberate, of course to deliberate so as to decide. What Aristotle calls the deliberative function would today be called decision-making. Aristotle means of course deliberation

should lead to a decision. On the other hand, the people who speak of decision do not necessarily mean the deliberation preceeding the decision. I think I found out who made the term 'decision' so popular in present-day political science -- it may be (inaudible), but I do not know.

Now let us go on where we left off.

Reader: "Deliberation is concerned with things that happen in certain ways for the most part, but in which the event is obscure, and with things in which it is indeterminate."

Strauss: What does he mean? One example -- one does not deliberate as to whether a stonebridge which one has to cut may collapse (inaudible . . .). But one deliberates about a marriage. There are certain general rules about marriage, but uncertainty as to their outcome because people prove to be different after marriage than before the marriage. And therefore deliberation.

Reader: "We call in others to aid us in deliberation on important questions, distrusting ourselves, as not being equal to deciding them."

Strauss: The implication is that the object of deliberation must be of a certain magnitude. For example, we would not deliberate whether we should buy this or that tie.

Reader: "We deliberate not about ends but about means, for a doctor does not deliberate about whether he should heal, nor an orator whether he shall convey, nor a statesman whether he should produce law and order, nor does anyone else deliberate about his end. They assume the end, and consider how and by what means it is to be attained. And if it seems to be produced by several means, they consider what is most easy and best to do; if it is achieved by one only, consider how it will be achieved by this and by what means this will be achieved, until they come to the first cause, which in the order of discovery is last."

Strauss: So you see again that deliberation of course occurs also in the arts and not only in action proper. So what we do is this. The act of deliberation is therefore analyzed by Aristotle, but I mention only one point. We try to find out through which instrumentality it can come into being most easily and most beautifully. Most easily doesn't mean (inaudible); most beautifully meaning without any detraction. There is a passage in Plato in the Republic, 541a, where he says how the best city will come into being. If (inaudible) and the philosophers have taken heart, they expel anyone (inaudible . . .), they will not be encumbered by the power of tradition, and so they would make the city and regime best in the quickest as well as easiest way. He could have said also in the most (inaudible).

Also in the later discussions of the Republic in Book II, for example in 370a and b, when he speaks of the introduction of the arts in the simple city, similar themes occur. Now how these are to be done more beautifully and more easily is by the radical division of labor. Generally speaking, I believe it is important in trying to understand the Republic to see that we have here a deliberation in the Aristotelian sense.

Read the sequel.

Reader: "For the person to deliberate, he is to investigate and analyze in the way described, as though he were analyzing a geometric construction. Not all this investigation appears to be deliberation, for example, mathematical investigation, but all deliberations should investigate."

Strauss: So deliberation is one species of investigation.
Read the sequel.

Reader: "And what is last in the order of analysis seems to be first in the order of its coming. (Inaudible) an impossibility to give up the first, for example if we need money and it cannot be got, but if a thing appears possible, we try to do it. By possible things I mean things that might be brought about by our own efforts, and these in a sense are a few things that can be brought about by the efforts of our friends, since the moving principle is in ourselves. The focus of investigation is sometimes the instruments and sometimes the use of them, and similarly in the other cases. Sometimes the means, sometimes the mode of using, or sometimes the mean of bringing it about. It seems then, as has been said, that man is a moving principle of action."

Strauss: Let us stop there. Our wish is to spend a few weeks in a Caribbean island, and then we deliberate about it. And one factor will be, at least in our time, whether we have the money. And if we find out we don't have the money, then it is impossible. There is a way out; we may have friends who have money, and they might be willing to finance this trip. So then it is feasible. Other deliberations are more complicated and deal with graver matters, for example, the deliberation made by a captain of a ship.

Now in order to appreciate properly the sanity of Aristotle's analysis, we should have a look at either Hobbes' Leviathan, Chapter 6, which deals with deliberation in the following way. "When in the mind of men, appetite and aversion, hopes and fears, concerning one and the same thing, arise alternately, and diverse good and evil consequences of the doing or omitting the thing propounded, come successively into our thoughts, so that sometimes we have an appetite for it, sometimes an aversion from it, and sometimes hope to be able to do it, sometimes despair or fear attend it, the whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes and

fears continue till either the thing be done or thought impossible because of deliberation."

So you see in other words a purely subhuman process -- thinking plays no role, although he uses the word 'thought' but he might (inaudible . . .). Then he gives some examples which are Aristotelian. Therefore, of things past there is no deliberation. because it is manifestly impossible to be changed, nor of things known to be impossible, as Aristotle said before, or thought so, because men know or think such deliberation (inaudible). But of things impossible which we see possible, we may deliberate not knowing it is in vain.

We call it deliberation because it is putting an end to the liberty -- de-liberation. Doing or omitting according to our own appetite or aversion. This alternate succession of appetite, aversion, hopes and fears, is noticed in other living creatures than of man, and therefore these also deliberate.

Now let me see. In deliberation the last appetite or aversion immediately appearing to the action or to the omission thereof is called the will, and these that have deliberation must necessarily also have will. So the definition of the word commonly given by the schools that it is a rational appetite is not good; for if it were, then there could be no voluntary act against reason. This is one of the characteristic misunderstandings of Aristotle. In rational (inaudible) that doesn't mean that it's a good appetite, but it means of a being which cannot help using or misusing reason.

So in other words, (inaudible) are desires or aversions. That which has to come at the end, the last (inaudible . . .) is the will. But that this is a rational process in itself is not admitted. And this has had a great effect on our age.

We have to stop here.

Lecture XV
Aristotle's Ethics, April 1, 1968

Strauss: Yes, Mr. _____?

Student: I would like a clarification of a statement you made last time -- you raised the question as to what are the theoretical principles of ethics as ethics.

Strauss: We must of course distinguish between ethics, what Aristotle does, and what the perfect gentleman does. The perfect gentleman does not have at his disposal such a perfect articulation of what virtue itself is and what the various virtues are as Aristotle did. That goes without saying. This we presuppose.

Now in the case of Plato -- Plato likes to call our good use of the understanding *phrōnesis*, although this becomes very theoretical -- for example, the question what is courage is distinguished from the question, what is the courageous action here and now, and this leads to another theoretical question, and this goes higher and higher, and still Plato calls it practical wisdom, because he denies that the distinction between practical understanding and theoretical understanding is ultimately there, because one shifts insensibly into the other. So there is a clear distinction between practical understanding and theoretical understanding.

That what the good man or statesman thinks is practical wisdom; that what the mathematician or physicist thinks is theoretical wisdom. Now the question is, how are the two related? And there is one medieval tradition, represented for instance by Dante, according to which the ultimate principles of which ethics makes use are supplied by theoretical reason, namely the knowledge of the end of man, as theoretical as the knowledge of the end of a horse or a tree or whatever. But the transformation of this theoretical proposition, isn't this the end of man?, into a practical proposition, this is what we should strive for. That is the great question. That is one of the most difficult questions of Aristotle's Ethics.

The question, I mean, of the cognitive status of the practical principles, and since Aristotle knew what he was doing, I suppose the solution can be reached if one digs deep enough, and takes every relevant thing as a consideration. The most important book from this point of view is Book VI which I think we should read. We should also read Book V.

But I think we must always raise these questions -- it is easy not to raise them, because many of the things which Aristotle says are so convincing and obvious that one does not think about them. In what perspective is this particular thing set? Is this a theoretical statement or is this a practical statement?

I unwisely overstated the case at the beginning of this course that there is no intent on Aristotle's part to refute characters in the way in which Plato makes such efforts. It is a bit more complicated.

Student: What about the dichotomy? It seems that Aristotle might appear to draw in the Ethics -- in fact, while it exists on a practical level, in conventional political society, as you might say the gentleman would see it, then the (inaudible) is in a sense subsumed into the theoretical knowledge of the philosopher. If in fact the moral virtues can point the way to theoretical knowledge, then it would seem that in the final analysis at any rate the moral virtue becomes subsumed into theoretical knowledge and in fact the division which at a lower level existed and on a higher level doesn't exist, that theoretical knowledge becomes practical knowledge.

Strauss: That was a very complicated and long statement. I do not know where to begin. For example, if you prove a mathematical theory that there are certain moral requirements in order to do that, that you must be awake, you should not be intoxicated and so on and so on. But that is not a moral virtue proper, because the whole propriety and whatever is entirely in the service of knowledge, and it is not its own end, as moral action would be proper.

Now this fundamental distinction is never (inaudible) by Aristotle. But if you have to do a good job, in theoretical science or for that matter any art, you must fulfill certain moral conditions. But this is not morality proper. This is only a requirement for some practice and it is not chosen for its own sake.

On a former occasion I gave you the example of a very first-rate carpenter who is drunk most of the time, but when he works, when he is sober, he is superior to any other carpenter. Well, the motive for his excellent work is not the work itself, but in order to get money so that he can buy more whiskey. That does not derogate from his quality as a carpenter. But in morality proper, the right action has to be done for its own sake, and not in order to get something for it. What is true of the arts applies also to the sciences.

Student: All right, you have a gentleman who is practicing the moral virtues for the sake of the moral virtues. Now in effect the gentleman might ask himself well, why moral virtue, why is it good that I be moral and virtuous?

Strauss: You have one answer which is I think good enough for all practical purposes, and that is that the man who wants to have a reason for being decent ceases by this very fact to be decent. And that is Aristotle's view of the matter. One has to consider the fact that they throw theories around which deny the importance of morality and which theories must be met by theoretical argument. This is true. But the question is, did Aristotle sufficiently consider the fact that the moral sphere is

only de iura, not de facto, self-sufficient.

Student: It would seem that it is not only the best theories which threaten to trap us, but in a way (inaudible) because the whole question of decency could come outside the realm of being oneself.

Strauss: All right, then let us discuss this example, why does a brave man face the dangers to his life. The answer given by Aristotle -- because of the nobility of the action. And Aristotle says it first, that the place of courage is the field of battle. Of course one can be courageous in other respects, toward pain, toward disease, toward hunger, and so on, but courage (inaudible) is courage on the field of battle. And the courageous man is the one who exposes his life because it is noble to do so. He doesn't go so far as Horace who said (inaudible . . .).

But if you raise the question, why this limitation of courage to courage on the battlefield or in war, why that -- Aristotle doesn't give you an answer. And I think he didn't do this out of laxity, but for very considerable reason. Everyone can see the reason which Aristotle does not give, namely that this defence of the country is of the utmost importance, is a dedication to the common good, and as such is more noble than dedication to one's own good, and that is that, but Aristotle remarkably does not say that.

So in other words Aristotle does not praise the virtues to the ends which ultimately legitimate the virtues, from a theoretical point of view.

Student: So that is understood that Aristotle does not praise these virtues?

Strauss: Generally speaking.

Student: Isn't that a statement to the fact that any type of reason, theoretical reason, about the virtues is somewhat suspect (inaudible . . .).

Student: Actually if you think about the reasons for decency, and you become indecent, that's kind of a repugnant thing to say.

Strauss: It has its difficulties but it also makes some sense. It is necessary to determine surely when you have a certain custom and people transgress it and say that it is merely conventional and passionate, i.e., it has no intrinsic necessity, then the question arises, is this true? Does it or does it not have intrinsic necessity, and then one has to go much deeper.

Student: What you're saying is I think the Aristotelian distinction between practical and theoretical wisdom is that fact leads to a blurring of that distinction, because ultimately

at least expressed theory, that is written down or spoken, the theoretical arguments have (inaudible . . .). . . that is for the sake of practice.

Strauss: Well then let us consider what speaks in favor of Aristotle and which I believe I mentioned on an earlier occasion. A fellow comes to Athens and he has discovered a new kind of fighting technique and he exhibits it. Two generals look at it and, as it happens, one says it is a very good idea and one says it is ridiculous, and then Socrates is dragged in because since the experts disagree, it has to go beyond the sphere of the experts, and Socrates says, well, let us first find out the purpose of all such techniques, and Socrates says, well, it's a bit forced perhaps, that these things are in the service of courage, of producing the virtue of courage, Now if we want to judge on a technique which serves this purpose, we have to first know what courage is, so they begin the discussion of courage, and the discussion does not lead to an end of that conversation.

Now what shall we do then? Shall we keep all practical questions in abeyance until all theoretical questions are resolved. This wouldn't work, and therefore from this point of view Aristotle presents a sound proposal, that that is a kind of ceiling beyond which the practical manner, the practical thinker, does not have to go.

That is also the case for Aristotle, and which Plato also recognized in his way of course, otherwise he could not have (inaudible).

Student: But isn't that ceiling rather high, for instance he could have set it (inaudible).

Strauss: That solution would not be sufficient. Under any circumstances. Why could there not be something like an unwritten law which is sufficiently determinate for practical purposes although it is exposed to quite a few difficulties theoretically. And something of this kind -- that is not the Aristotelian expression for that -- but it is only a suggestion in order to make it a bit more clear what Aristotle is doing.

I suggest that we begin now with our reading and I remind you briefly of the context.

The highest good we have heard is happiness, but the core of happiness is virtue. Virtue is the habit of choosing or preferring. The thing chosen is a kind of the voluntary or spontaneous. Therefore Aristotle discusses first what is spontaneous and what is not spontaneous. And the specific difference of the object of choice from voluntary and involuntary things as such is that choice is not desire nor anger nor wish nor opinion. It is previously deliberated. Premeditated would not bring out precisely what Aristotle means.

Therefore, he has to raise the question, what is the object of deliberation? Answer: only such things as we, i.e., I, or we here, can do or bring about. We do not deliberate about things which we cannot achieve, which man as man cannot achieve, and we do not deliberate about things which are of no concern to us.

The sphere of deliberation is the sphere where exact foresight is impossible. Therefore there is deliberation of course not only regarding actions but also regarding the arts. Those arts where exact foresight is not possible. Therefore physicians deliberate, but shoemakers do not deliberate. Or to give the Aristotelian example, nor do writers in the simple sense deliberate about their writing because the rules are strict and nothing need to be done about that.

Now I suggest then that we go on -- 1112b, 20. This still continues the discussion of deliberation.

Reader: "For when deliberating one seems in the procedure described to be pursuing an investigation or analysis that resembles the analysis of a figure in geometry. Indeed, it appears that though not all investigation is deliberation, for example, mathematical investigation is not, all deliberation is investigation. And the last step in the analysis seems to be the first step in the execution of the design."

Strauss: Literally in the coming into being. The coming into being for example of that figure or the coming into being of the action.

Reader: "Then, if they have come up against an impossibility, they abandon the project, for example, if it requires money and money cannot be procured, but if, on the other hand, it proves to be something possible, begin to act. By possible, I mean able to be performed by our agency. The things we do through the agency of our friends counting in a sense as done by ourselves, since the origin of their action is in us. In practicing an art, the question is at one moment what tools to use and at another how to use them and similarly in other spheres. We have to consider sometimes what means to employ, sometimes how exactly any given means are to be employed."

Strauss: So that deliberation is a kind of investigation. But the opposite is of course not true, because an investigation may be purely theoretical. The analysis goes to the deliberation as to whether the thing is feasible for us. So deliberation concerns instruments, for example money, and the way of getting or using them. Thirdly, the human beings to be persuaded and so on. Yes, now?

Reader: "It appears, therefore, as has been said, that a man is the origin of his actions, and that the province of deliberation

is to discover actions within one's own power to perform. And all our actions aim at ends other than ourselves. It follows that we do not deliberate about ends, means, nor yet do we deliberate about particular facts, for instance, is this object alone, or is this loaf properly baked, for these are matters of direct perception. Deliberation must stop at the particular fact, or we embark on an endless process."

"The object of deliberation and the object of choice are the same except that when a thing is chosen it has already been determined, since it is the thing already selected as a result of our deliberation. For a man stops inquiring how he shall act as soon as he has carried back the origin of action to himself and the dominant part of himself, for it is this part that chooses."

Strauss: In deliberation we end when we have found the beginning of the action within our capacity, within us. We are the origin. We are responsible. The actions are for the sake of something else. Is this unqualifiably true? Is this true in the case of the good actions proper. From what we know there seems to be a clear contradiction, a solution to which we have not yet found.

What Aristotle suggests in part of the passages -- let the end be the noble action on the battlefield -- we deliberate, should this still be held at all costs? And here the end is the noble action. But the end is given, and the noble action is determined with a view to a different end. We must have more material before we can clarify this point.

But this is a general point which perhaps can be said in the following way. Aristotle says on the one hand that the core of virtue is choice. Choice deals with the means to the ends. That we have read here in this book. But later on in Book VI he will say it is virtue which makes us see the end and another faculty, also virtue but not moral virtue, called practical wisdom, makes us see what is required for the end. This difficulty we are not yet able to dispose of.

There must be a beginning of the deliberation. The beginning is of course the end, and there must be an end to the deliberation. Otherwise the deliberation would be in vain. The question is then, what we are going back from the end to the mean until we reach the first step, and the first step is the last stage in deliberation and the first stage in the execution, the coming into being. Is this clear? Think of any deliberation that you are engaged in and you will see that this is so.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Then what does Aristotle omit?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: For instance, you come to another town where you have a job, let us say, and you have to raise the question and to answer it, where to live? You need to find proper living quarters. Then there are various alternatives which you know as well as I do and then you discuss them, and you have to consider your finances, your conveniences, and eventually you reach a point where you say this is the only thing which is suitable. If there are two things which are equally suitable, then you flip the coin.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: You mean this end or more than one end? A variety of ends and they conflict with each other or what?

Student: Probably you would have several factors in mind.

Strauss: But would this not come in precisely in this process of deliberation, because (inaudible) need, and therefore you have to deliberate about how to get proper living quarters, what is convenient and feasible for you. Then you see then that this conflicts with another end -- you have obviously other needs which have to be addressed to, and this requires some deliberation about how to balance one's budget, and this is a process of deliberation. I believe the difficulty comes from an assertion frequently made that every end can be a means and every means can be an end. This is what Aristotle absolutely denies. There are things which would be ends only for very unreasonable people, or could be ends only playfully. Take stamps. Stamps are obviously means for getting your letter to the receiver. These means can be made ends in a way by stamp collecting. But this is not something quite serious. It can be very entertaining, but not a need as great as the postal system and (inaudible).

Surely from Aristotle's point of view there is no simple possibility to regard all means as ends and all ends as means. There are certain things which can only be regarded as ends and things which can only be regarded as means. The complication arises only if we take the playful as serious, and that is a fundamental error.

(Inaudible), a good man, is a serious one, not the playful one. He can have a certain playfulness in its proper place. There is a proper place for being playful unless you have so much money and even then you can use your money for better purposes than to just make fun.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But if this is a deliberation proper, does this not lead to a higher end? With a view to which you have settled this question? Whether punishment should only be corrective or some retribution? How do you go about settling this question? Must you not always refer to an end?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The well-being of the child; that seems to be rather obvious. Perhaps the good reputation of the family might come in.

Will you go on where we left off in 1113a, 7.

Reader: "This may be illustrated by the ancient constitutions represented in Homer. The kings used to proclaim to the people the measures they had chosen to adopt. As then the object of choice is something within our power, after deliberation we desire, it will be a deliberate desire of things in our power, so we first deliberate, then select, and finally fix our desire according to the result of our deliberation."

"Let this serve as a description and outline of choice and of the nature of its objects and the fact that it deals with means to ends."

Strauss: Yes, now is this clear what deliberation and choice mean? Choice is the end of deliberation. The deliberation may be very defective and then the choice presumably will be bad. But without deliberation, no choice.

Student: Previously I believe you spoke of will as being part of choice and I was wondering can a person deliberate what could be an alternative and then choose one saying that alternative is the best, and wish to do it but not have the will to do it, and not have the control over his passions so that he could say that choice and will are not separate?

Strauss: I said that there is no Aristotelian word for will, or no Greek word for will. There is a word 'wish', and we translate the word, , by willing. But it does not have the precise meaning. What we mean by will is called by Aristotle choice. And the choice is the core of the action. You choose to help a poor man -- that's an act of the will -- for Aristotle an act of choice. You may do it for improper reasons or you may do it for the proper reasons, so the right choice would of course be for the proper reasons. And this is brought about by being brought up properly and the formation of the character being terminated, so that it is a matter of course to do it properly for the right reasons. Where does the difficulty come in then?

Student: Could there be a case in which a man has this judgment, in other words, he could deliberate and reason by his faculties which is the best alternative. But because say his passion overcame his reason, let's say he is fearful of actually engaging in the action, he will be held back. He will have this judgment but he will not actually act.

Strauss: This would be a problematic thing of which Aristotle

spoke which in the case of sensual desires it is called incontinence. The man who regards smoking as bad and cannot control his desire. So that means according to Aristotle he has not been properly trained or not properly trained himself so that he does not even desire things which are bad.

The good will has two ingredients -- that Aristotle will make clear in Book VI. One is virtue, and the other is practical wisdom, and they come together. So what you call judgment is an ingredient of good action. When you act properly, if you don't judge properly, that your desire is in agreement with your judgment, that is not the consequence of your judgment. It is the consequence of your training by others or yourself of your desire. And if these two things converge, then you have the good human being. That he sees the right thing and (inaudible) desires it because it is right, that is the good man according to Aristotle.

Now the point which Aristotle makes here, at the end of the passage we just read, desire, or striving for it is perhaps a better interpretation, goes toward the end. This striving for an end precedes the deliberation, or else the deliberation would never start. The choice follows the deliberation. Is this clear? First you desire for something, you deliberate, and then you make a choice after the deliberation has come to an end. But it must be understood that the striving for this during this process, otherwise the deliberation would stop. Because there is no longer any great need. And that object of striving which has been deliberated upon, this is the object of choice.

Aristotle makes it clear again at the end that this analysis, this definition of choice, is given only in outline. And we can easily see why this is so for we have seen that deliberation is common to action and to some of the arts, and it has not been made sufficiently clear what is the difference between moral and technical deliberation, which have obviously very different (inaudible).

Let us continue then. I wish we could complete this section today but we cannot and we will see how far we can go.

Reader: "Wish, on the contrary, as was said above is for ends. But while some hold that what is wished for is the good, others think it is what appears to be good. Those however who say that what is wished for is the truly good are faced by the conclusion that what a man who then chooses to wrongly wish for does not really wish for at all. If it is to be wished for, it must be good, as in the case assumed it may so happen that the man wishes for something bad. Those on the other hand who say that what appears good is wished for are forced to admit that there is no such thing that is by nature wished for, but that what each man thinks to be good is wished for in his case. Yet opposite things may appear good to different people."

Strauss: Let us stop here. This raises the question, what is the object of wish? I.e., of that which precedes everything. One can say the truly good. But then we would have to say that

bad ends are never wished, contrary to experience. And we should say that the object of wish is the seeming good, because whoever wishes anything wishes it as good for himself. And if the latter is true, then there is nothing by nature wished or worthy to be wished at all, because whatever strikes the fancy of anyone at any time is then as good as anything else. Literally stated, all men strive for happiness, but there is no determinate meaning of happiness.

This passage makes it quite clear, clearer than any other, that the properly understood happiness is the natural end of man.

Now Aristotle has stated only the difficulty. In the sequel he will try to solve it.

Reader: "Is there therefore neither of these views satisfactory, perhaps we should say that what is wished for in the true and unqualified sense is the good, but that what appears good to each person is wished for by him, and accordingly that the good man wished what is truly wished for. The bad man for anything as it may happen. Just as in the case of our bodies, a man of sound constitution finds truly healthy food best, but some other diet may be healthy for one who is delicate, and so are things bitter and sweet, hard and heavy, and so forth. For the good man judgeth everything correctly what things truly are that they seem to him to be."

Strauss: Aristotle solves the difficulty. What is by nature to be wished for is actually willed or wished only by the good man, while the bad man wills or wishes something which merely seems to be good and here is an infinite variety of things which seem to be good.

Aristotle exemplifies this by the example of the things healthy contributing to health, of the truly healthy things, and the things which are healthy only relatively. Now what is truly healthy is what is good for the healthy man. The relatively healthy things are those which are healthy, restorative to health, let us say, for sick people. They are healthy only in a secondary sense. Of course, it is only an example. Otherwise one would have to say the bad things chosen by the various bad people are also good in a secondary sense, which Aristotle is not prepared to say.

Now let us go on again.

Reader: "What things truly are (Inaudible . . .) for special things are noble and pleasant corresponds with each kind of character, or perhaps what chiefly distinguishes the good man is that he sees the truth at each time, using himself as it were as the standard and measure of the noble and pleasant. It appears to be pleasure that misleads the mass of men, for it seems to

them to be good though it is not, so they choose what is pleasant as good and and shun pain and evil."

Strauss: So there is a certain relativity not only of the pleasant things, but even of the noble to the habit, if therefore the good man is here then called the rule and measure, only to him will the good appear to be good, the truly good. To the other it will not appear to be good. There is the immediate case of which we have spoken -- if someone sees the good but follows the worst course.

Student: Could you talk about Aristotle and Plato (inaudible) where they say one desires love and one can't will love. This is in part a criticism of that.

Strauss: Yes, this is correct. And also some agreement. The agreement is that in both cases the good does not come to sight, according to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. But for Aristotle the simplistic Socratic thesis, that virtue is knowledge, is wrong, and therefore the twofold (inaudible) analysis of the good actions into the two, (inaudible) independent ingredients, sociability, reasonableness, and habit. The habit is acquired by habituation. (Inaudible . . .). These are two different faculties, and Socrates does not make that distinction. The view that virtue is knowledge -- what that means is a very long question. Whether he means it as literally as it seems and as Aristotle frequently takes it -- surely this proper ingredient does not come out, and Aristotle, --- Plato, does make a distinction between wider virtue and genuine virtue. Genuine virtue would be knowledge, and wider virtue would be based on habituation and opinion. Toward the end of the Republic, about 612, there is this remark that non-philosophic people chose their way of life prior to this life and these are people whose virtue is acquired only by habit. For Aristotle there is no moral virtue which is not due to habituation.

This is a very crude statement. If you read for example the first book of Plato's Laws, when Plato was aware of the importance of the habit of habituation for becoming virtuous, but somehow Plato preferred to discuss especially in these earlier dialogues the question as if virtue could be reduced to knowledge. If taken literally, surely there is no dissension.

Student: Does Aristotle make provisions for a type of virtue superior to that of habituation?

Strauss: Well, this is not genuine virtue. And there are a few discussions of this in Aristotle's Ethics. When he discusses courage, he discusses five pseudo-forms of courage, courage in contradistinction to true courage. And then the discussion of continence in Book VII is in a way also the discussion of

a kind of virtue. Continenence being lower than temperance. The continent man may not have a bad desire, but the continent man having bad desires may control them.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: How can you draw this conclusion from what I said?

Student: Insofar as mere habituation

Strauss: (Inaudible.)

Student: If there can be types of habituation, some types of which are vulgar, and some types which are not vulgar, habituation itself can't be the (inaudible).

Strauss: The question is whether these pseudo-forms are not all due to habituation, for example, something like a natural boldness which is not due to habituation. But you are of course right nevertheless because we have to think of the end of the Ethics, where the wise man appears and under the light of him merely moral virtue becomes debunked. To that extent you are right, But this subject has not yet come up in the text.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: For example, most men like to have all kinds of conveniences like housing without cockroaches and other things of this kind. These are the things by nature good and Aristotle says they are good only for the good because other things can only be corrupted by them.

(Inaudible . . .). There must be principles acceptable to the large majority of men if there is to be a decent civilized life. And therefore these principles must not be in need of a complicated theoretical deduction, although the philosophy may be interesting.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: According to Locke, the legislator has nothing whatever to do with virtue and vice. That is the price you pay for that. You are very pragmatic. Lay your foundations low but solid, (inaudible . . .).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the question is is this due to the theory or to a heritage antedating that theory? But to say virtue and vice are utterly irrelevant to the political society and the only thing is to protect property, (inaudible), namely the habit of acting well habitually.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: One can say that what the Platonic discussions presuppose has been elaborated. You have the discussion of courage for example. You know something about courage without any question, but you do not get a full picture of the phenomenon of courage, as ordinarily understood. This you get only from Aristotle, because Plato is much too eager to transcend that ordinary understanding in the direction of the highest possible understanding. For Aristotle the fact that courage is located on the battlefield is accepted as belonging to the definition of courage, that courage prior to the invention of medical (inaudible) or any other (inaudible) or toward any danger, is not fundamentally different from the courage shown on the battlefield. (Inaudible . . .) and this is an inducement for Plato to say that let us forget about the popular notion which for good practical reasons (inaudible) the case of military courage and therefore is unfair to other kinds of courage. And then he finds one or two more steps, and then he comes to the point where courage is identical with virtue and the specific difference of courage is lost.

I think one can see both the advantages and disadvantages of the two philosophers. On the one hand, we really should know what we primarily understand by courage, primarily meaning in a political context and why this is so, to make it clear to ourselves. What Aristotle does is less acceptable to what is now called the intellectual (inaudible). I mean there is a truly political bias of Aristotle that is not the same as the bias of the intellectual. The intellectual would be more willing to go with Plato. But on the other hand, the intellectual has got a point that the perspective of the practical man is more limited and some people at any rate must transcend it.

Student: In speaking of the various differences between Plato and Aristotle, you used the term 'advantages of the various two'. I wonder is that a proper or valuable way of attempting to understand them.

Strauss: There are advantages for theory, for understanding. There are advantages for practical purposes, such as the formation of the character of a citizen body. I mean there is no a priori certainties.

Student: In what sense is it proper to speak of a philosophy in terms of its advantages? Instead of its correct understanding of things?

Strauss: But is not philosophy frequently thought to be not only now but at all times of help to men?

Student: But does one judge primarily in terms of its advantages to men or in terms of its understanding of things?

Strauss: But why should one rush such a decision? It is perfectly sufficient for our present purposes to see that these are two

different considerations. I think it is very important to see that they are different considerations, that it is not a foregone conclusion that the quest for truth for its own sake is simply in harmony with the needs of man as a social and political human being. This is a question which must be raised and therefore one should balance two considerations, and therefore we speak of advantages and disadvantages.

Let us go on here.

Reader: "If one holds we wish for our ends, the means to our ends are matters of deliberation and choice"

(The first half of the tape ran out at this point.)

"But if it is within our power to do and to refrain from doing right and wrong, and if, as we saw, being good or bad is doing right or wrong, it consequently depends on us whether we are virtuous or vicious."

Strauss: He draws the conclusion from the fact that deliberation and choice has to do with the means to the end. The end is natural and does not depend on us. It is imposed on us by nature. But the means to the end had to be discovered by us and must be within our power; otherwise we could not achieve the end. Hence, since virtue and vice are at home in the sphere of what leads to the end, they are in our power and we are responsible for being either virtuous or vicious or something inbetween. The object of wish, the wished, does not depend on us because it is imposed on us by nature as we have seen before.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There is a question . . . (inaudible) takes a job. They are responsible for their being good men, and they are not responsible for their being unhappy or miserable men. Because that does not depend on them. But because virtue has this particular character which it has according to Aristotle even in their misery they are never contented. Their virtue will show in their misery.

Now let us read a bit more.

Reader: "To say that none are willingly wicked or unwillingly blessed is to be half false though half true. It is true that noone is unwilling to be blessed, and it is not true that wickedness is not spontaneous."

Strauss: This reminds us somewhat of the Socratic saying, that noone is voluntarily bad nor involuntarily happy. And Aristotle says it surely doesn't matter but it is true. The first part is wrong -- men are responsible for their wickedness and hence their wickedness is voluntary.

Reader: "Or else we must contradict which we just now asserted and say that man is not the originator and beginner of his actions as he is of his children. But if it is manifest that a man is the author of his own actions, and if we are able to trace our conduct back to any other origins than those within ourselves, then actions of which the origins are within us, themselves depend upon us and are spontaneous. This conclusion seems to be attested both by men's behavior in private life and by the practice of lawgivers. For they punish an exact regress from those who do evil except when it is done under compulsion or through ignorance for which he himself is not responsible. And honor those who do noble deeds in order to encourage the one sort and to repress the other. But nobody tries to encourage us to do things that do not depend upon ourselves and are not voluntary, since it is no good our being persuaded not to feel heat nor pain nor hunger or the like because we should feel them all the same."

Strauss: Here Aristotle gives a proof of a kind for his assertion that we are responsible for our goodness or badness. Namely, what is presupposed in all legislation, in punishment and in rewards, and this is a most obvious argument. Whether it is sufficiently good is another matter. It was a question in antiquity already but in modern times perhaps with greater inference by Hobbes.

I read to you a few passages from Hobbes' Of Liberty and Necessity. Bishop Brownhall attacked Hobbes' for his view on freedom and he speaks of the inconvenience of the view that man's actions are predetermined. The first inconvenience he says is this. "That the laws which prohibit any action will be unjust." Especially since the prohibition is followed by punishment, and the man is not responsible.

Now Hobbes says this -- Hobbes is in favor of punishment and against freedom of will. "But suppose that though on pain of death prohibits stealing can there be a man who by the strength of that temptation is necessitated to steal and is thereupon put to death. Does not this punishment deter others from that. Is it not a cause that others fear not? Does it not frame and make their wills to justice?" So there is Hobbes' contention that the practice of punishment is is perfectly unpalatable with the (inaudible . . .).

"Men are justly killed, not that for their actions are not necessitated but because they are noxious and they are spared and preserved whose actions are not noxious." In other words, one does not need (inaudible) freedom of will in order to justify the practice of punishment, the punishment being itself a chain in the (inaudible).

By punishment and by honouring men are made good. He would even go so far that Hobbes' own doctrine would be regarded by him as a part of the (inaudible), given this state of discussion

and given the fact that Hobbes had this kind of training and this kind of nature -- he couldn't help developing this doctrine and then writing the Leviathan, and then the Leviathan could influence the English scholar, and Hobbes had at least the hope that it would become the textbook in England, and that the gentlemen who would later be justices of the peace would be trained Hobbians and would mete out punishment which is perfectly just in Hobbes' view though it denies the kind of responsibility which according to Aristotle man has.

Now let us read a little bit later.

Reader: "Indeed, the fact that an offense was committed in ignorance it itself made a ground for punishment in cases where the offender is made to be responsible for his ignorance. For example, the penalty is doubled if the offender was drunk. Because the origin of the offense was in the man himself and he might have avoided getting drunk which was the cause of his not knowing what he was doing. Also, men are punished for committing offenses through some provision of the law unknown which they ought to have known and might have known without difficulty. This is so in other cases where ignorance is held to be due to negligence on the ground that the offender need not have been ignorant and could have taken the trouble to ascertain the facts. It may be objected that perhaps he is not the sort of man to take the trouble. Well, but men are themselves responsible for having become careless through living carelessly and they are for being unjust or profligate, that they do wrong or pass their time in drinking or dissipation. They acquire a particular quality by constantly acting in a particular way. This is shown by the way in which some men train themselves for some contest or pursuit, and practice continually. Therefore, only an utterly senseless person who fails to know that our characters are the result of our conduct."

Strauss: So, in other words, men are responsible for acts committed while they are drunk for they are responsible for their being drunk. They are also responsible for their ignorance, if this ignorance can be avoided. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. The ignorance of fact may be an excuse, if in the circumstances the ignorance was (inaudible) inevitable.

Aristotle does not here even allude to the possibility that there might be men who are by nature incapable of taking these efforts... and the question who is not sensitive to these things, that there cannot be by nature such a man, is not taken up.

Thomas Aquinas explains it thus in the following manner. If someone wishes to take a walk in the summer's heat knowing that he would perspire, then he wished to perspire, i.e., knowing that

as an inevitable consequence, he chose to perspire. Although the two wishes have a somewhat different character -- the wish to take the walk, and the wish to perspire, but the voluntariness is common to both. This is a non-criminal, harmless action, but it has the understanding of how far extends human responsibility.

Student: I can't see how the desire to take a walk is translated into the desire to perspire. That may be one wants to take a walk in spite of the fact that one knows one will perspire, that is a far different cry from I want to take a walk because I want to perspire . . .

Strauss: But you first saw it -- you saw that you would perspire and you said I am going . . .

Student: But it's inevitable that you are going to perspire..

Strauss: But one wonders. It doesn't mean that you desire it. Look at the men who throw their merchandise or their luggage in the ocean because it is the only way to save themselves. But Aristotle also says they do it voluntarily in the circumstances. Because they are confronted with a choice. Should they perish together with their luggage or should they survive their luggage, and they make the choice.

Strauss: Now let us turn now to the sixth book of the Ethics. Now Aristotle opens this book in about this manner. We have seen that the good man is the man who chooses the mean correctly, and the mean is that what the right (inaudible) says it is. We can say the verdict of reason, meaning that what the verdict of reason declares it to be. This is the target at which one must look in determining one's choice. But this is of course too general. One reason -- because it applies to the arts as well as to the virtues. It applies as well to the carpenter or to the housebuilder that he must not too much, not too little, and so on. Therefore a new investigation is necessary, and that is what this book is devoted to.

We will begin at the beginning, 1138b, 35, and in some editions, Chapter 2.

Reader: "Now we have divided the virtues of the soul into two groups, the virtues of the character and the virtues of the intellect. The former, the moral virtues, we have already discussed. Our account of the latter must be prefaced by some remarks about psychology."

Strauss: Well about the soul. There is an inclination not only of students, but also of professors, that if there is a choice between simple words and the technical words, they prefer the technical words. Psychology is the science or the study of the soul, but Aristotle does not speak about the study of the soul; he speaks about the soul.

Reader: "It has been said before that the soul has two parts, one rational and the other irrational. Let us now similarly divide the rational parts, and let it be assumed that there are two rational faculties, one whereby we contemplate those things whose first principles are invariable, and one whereby we contemplate those things which admit of variation. Since, on the assumption that knowledge is based on a likeness of some sort between subject and object, the parts of the soul adapted to the cognition of objects that are of different kinds must themselves differ in kind."

Strauss: There is of course nothing of subject and object in Aristotle. It is convenient for the translator to use these terms and to avoid the seemingly bit more complicated previous questions which strictly speaking correspond to subject and object.

Reader: "These two rational faculties may be designated the scientific and the calculative respectively. Since calculation

is the same as deliberation, and deliberation is never exercised about things that are invariable, so that the calculative part is the separate part of the rational path of the soul. We have therefore to ascertain what is the position of each of these faculties is the best, for that will be the virtue of each."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. Aristotle must make clear to us the difference between the choice of the mean in the arts and the choice of the mean in action. But he has to put his (inaudible) on a broader basis, so he begins first with a new distinction within the rational part. There is a scientific part, we can translate it, and there is the calculating part. The scientific part deals with what is unchangeable, with what is always the same, and the calculating or deliberative part deals with what is essentially changeable. Is this distinction familiar to you? You must have heard of it. Not all of you perhaps, but many of you.

Plato's Republic. There is the divided line. There is the science of what is always the same and never changeable and then there is something else which Plato calls opinion. Here Aristotle doesn't speak of opinion but later on in this book occasionally as it were of what he calls here the calculating part, the opining part.

Student: It would seem to me that the calculating or deliberating part, at least the way it is used in the dividing line image, would belong to the third level of (inaudible), that faculty which is capable of making distinctions; in other words, it has the faculty of both going onwards and upwards, as well as to make deduction toward the lower.

Strauss: But in the divided line, is it not essential to connect the reference to the changeable things. Don't you in numbering deal with pure numbers. Do you not have the relation to the things numbered, and the same applies naturally to geometry.

Student: That's true. I was just wondering how you put the calculating and deliberating part exclusively in the area of opinion.

Strauss: Partly based on the fact that Aristotle himself uses the word (inaudible) for what he calls here *logisticon*.

Student: But my only observation is that Plato puts it above the half, in other words, in the third part.

Strauss: Sure. Both are not sense perception; that goes without saying. Neither are they here. Both are rational faculties.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The spheres in which the stars move, they are unchangeable. But the species are unchangeable. Every cat grows and decays and dies.

But the species of cat is always, was always, and always will be. And therefore the biologists up to the present day speak of the species cat and not of this here cat. I mean whereas the cat lover, the cat owner, is concerned with the individual cat, the biologist is not concerned with this here cat except accidentally. Because it may give him an occasion for studying something about cattishness.

So the distinction still prevails in spite of the great changes which have taken place. Now this distinction between the scientific and the calculating part is not sufficient, because we want to understand the difference between the virtues and the arts, and the virtues and the arts would both have to do with the latter, with the calculating part, and therefore Aristotle introduces now a somewhat different consideration. In a,17.

Reader: "But the virtue of a faculty is related to the special function which that faculty performs. Now there are three elements in the soul which control action and the attainment of truth. Namely perception, intellect, and desire."

Strauss: Perception means here sense perception.

Reader: "Of these perception never originates affairs, as is shown by the fact that animals have perception but do not participate in affairs."

Strauss: Affairs means action.

Reader: "Pursuit and avoidance in the sphere of desire correspond to affirmation and denial in the sphere of the intellect. Hence, inasmuch as moral virtue is a disposition in the mind in regard to choice, and choice is deliberate desire, it follows that if the choice is to be good, both the principle must be true and the desire right. And then desire must pursue the same things as principle. We are here speaking of practical thinking."

Strauss: So Aristotle makes here, apparently without making clear why, the distinction -- the distinction not within the rational part itself, but between reason and desire, and makes here one point. In the good action, reason must be active in this way and culminates in a true verdict, and the desire must be correct. So much so that there must be a harmony, that what the verdict of reason points to, and that what the desire aims at, be identical.

This is a kind of prefiguration of what the difference between the arts and the virtues are. In the arts, the desire does not play a role as we shall see later.

Student: Is it sort of the attempt which Socrates makes at the end of Book 4 about spiritedness and reason (inaudible). It seems to be a problematic attempt . . . of course he is going to outline it further, but it seems like kind of a shaky starting point.

Strauss: You say Aristotle should have given us a reason why he decides to speak of this here. But since his object is to make clear still more what moral virtue is more than anything else, and moral virtue has a rational ingredient, it is impossible to be a good man without being a man of judgment, but moral virtue also has another ingredient which we would say today has to do with the will. But Aristotle says there is desire or striving. This has to be considered from every point of view. There is nothing improper in that, although the transition is (inaudible), not smooth.

Now let us read the sequel.

Reader: "We are here speaking of practical thinking, the attainment of truth in regard to action. Truth is indeed the function of every part of the intellect, but that of the practical intelligence is the attainment of truth corresponding to right desire."

Strauss: Aristotle makes now explicit what he had not done before, that he is dealing with the difference between theoretical and practical. Theoretical, scientific, practical. Between theoretical truth and practical truth. More precisely, between truth and correctness.

In the theoretical reason, the good, the excellence, is the truth. In the practical, the good consists of harmony with right desire. Perhaps we can explain this as follows. I know that it is wrong to steal. I know it. But I have a desire to steal. Here the knowledge is obviously not enough. This knowledge does not make my viewing of the situation good. My viewing of the overall situation is good only if my desire is also correct. So it is then necessary for moral virtue a cooperation of desire and reason or intellect. Aristotle will speak about this in the sequel.

Reader: "Now the cause of actions, the efficient, not the final cause, is choice, and the cause of choice is desire and reasoning directed at some end. Hence, choice necessarily involves both intellect or thought and a certain disposition of character. For doing well and the reverse in the sphere of action necessarily involves thought and character. Thought by itself however proves nothing. But only practical thought directed to an end."

Strauss: Now is this clear, or do we have difficulties?

Student: What do you make of that statement in the light of his later comment (inaudible). It would seem that the man who is devoted to the ultimately good life is in the light of this passage at any rate exercising a mind in an essentially useless pursuit.

Strauss: On the basis of what particular remark?

Student: In the passage about thought by itself not meaning anything.

Strauss: But he strives for knowledge first. Is there not then some striving here? And when the striving has come to its fulfillment, then there is indeed no longer any need for this striving, and there is perfect contentment and satisfaction. We discussed this question last time or the time before in a somewhat different form.

Now let us go on.

Reader: "Indeed, the moving cause of productive activity is this also."

Strauss: Productive activity in contradistinction to practicalness.

Reader: "Since he who makes something always has some further end in view, the act of making is not an end in itself, but is only a means and belongs to something else."

Strauss: We do not need that now because Aristotle will speak of that later. The main point is this, that practical action is radically different from production. In production something is produced which survives the production.... in practice the end act is the action itself. The shoemaker does this work in order to bring about a shoe, and when the shoe is produced, his shoe-making becomes wholly uninteresting. But in the case of action, it is the action and the action alone which is intended.

Let us turn to 1139b, 14.

Reader: "Let us then discuss these virtues afresh, going more deeply into the matter."

Strauss: So in other words, Aristotle is now again enlarging the issue, because the clarity he has given us hitherto is insufficient. The difference between moral virtue and the arts.

Reader: "Let it be assumed that there are five qualities through which the mind achieves truth and affirmation or denial. Namely, art or technical skills, scientific knowledge, truth, wisdom, and intelligence. Conception and opinion are capable of error. The nature of scientific knowledge, employing the term in its exact sense regarding its analogous usage, it is made clear as follows. We often see that a thing which we know scientifically cannot vary, but a thing which can vary is beyond the range of our observations. We do not know whether it exists or not. An object of scientific knowledge exists of necessity. It is therefore eternal, for everything existing of absolute necessity is eternal, and what is eternal does not come into existence or perish."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So there are five faculties through which the soul grants the truth, which are intrinsically truthful. The way in which opinion is not -- opinion can be true or false opinion equally well, but science cannot be true or false science. Nor can prudence or practical wisdom be true or false practical wisdom. The science then applies to the other things mentioned here.

We naturally begin again as we did before with science as the matter of the greatest importance. Now we skip the sequel and also the next chapter which is devoted to the difference between art and action, between art and practical wisdom. Because what we need for our understanding today and in later passages. We turn now to 1140a, 24.

Reader: "We may arrive at a definition of prudence in considering whom are the persons whom we call prudent. Now it is held that the mark of a prudent man able to deliberate well about what is good and advantageous for himself and not in but one department, for instance, what is good for his health, but what is advantageous as a means to the good life in general."

Strauss: What is good with a view to the whole life as a whole. So what then is the prudent man? He deliberates well about his life as a whole. For example, he would not deliberate well about the building of a house because that would be done much better by a housebuilder or Aristotle's example about health and this is better done by a physician. But his life as a whole. Needless to say, that this deliberating well implies that he act on it because if a man deliberates well, but acts poorly, then noone would call him a sensible man. One would find him a very strange man, that he knows so very well what should be done and does in each case the opposite. So the deliberation includes the decision.

Now is it what -- life as a whole? In contradistinction to any partial consideration.

Student: He does not seem to arrive at a conclusion about it, except for some tentative ideas. . .

Strauss: Yes, you mean namely when he discusses about being happy and this kind of thing.

Student: There seems to be a dividing line divided in two parts - one part the faculty all of the arts can cover, and the rest would be a principle which included that and would go beyond that.

Strauss: This is not practical enough. Give us an example of the kinds of questions a prudent man would settle by himself where he does not go to an expert.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: There is also private life with great possibilities of acting prudently and imprudently.

Student: First of all it would be how one lives his life.

Strauss: Except this is very general.

Student: Taking a bath for example and not putting in too much hot water and cold water, and finding a mean between the hot and the cold water.

Strauss: A bathmaster would do this much better. For example, the question, should he marry?, and should he marry Miss A or Miss B, that would concern his life as a whole, unless you regard marriage as a strictly temporary arrangement, and then it does not matter.

Student: But what about marriage (inaudible)?

Strauss: That is a question, but Aristotle implies no. The decision must be settled by a prudent man himself, because otherwise man would declare himself bankrupt from the point of view of prudence, saying I am incapable of taking care of my own affairs and I have to have someone else. It could also be -- should he have a country house and a house in town -- this is not the question for the architect to decide. And others -- what kind of education should he give to his children. There he can perhaps have expert advice, but to whom he will go as an expert, this is already the question where prudence would come in. In other words, the expertise is here not so obvious as in the case of medicine and architecture. Now . . .

Reader: "This is proved by the fact that we also speak of people as prudent or wise in some particular things when they calculate well with a view to attaining some particularly serious end, other than those ends which have as an object an art."

Strauss: Now what does he mean by this remark? That prudence comes into play where art, let alone science, is of no help. Let us speak of hunting -- a good instinct, a hunting dog.

Here we see the difficulty which we have and to which some of you have alluded. In our age and already for some time we have the tendency to replace prudence ever more with art, even perhaps regarding methods like marriage, that the marriage counsellor takes the place of the prudent man or woman. Or many other things. But the difficulty which comes up here is this -- if we think through the possibility of a complete technization of life, along the modern lines, we have then one limitation, admitted limitation of the applied sciences. And that is that the value judgment cannot be settled by the technician. The technician couldn't tell you should you marry or not because this would depend on certain value judgments. But if you have

desire, the chances that you will get along well with this kind of woman is greater than with that kind of woman. But ultimately and radically there remains a difficulty regarding the value judgment.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the question that Aristotle makes it so easy when he brings up the question of marriage to forget love . . .

Student: But how does it relate to love?

Strauss: I cannot help forgetting the passage in the Politics when he speaks about marriage -- 35 and 18 are the respective ages, and I think the notion is that love will come after the consummation of marriage, not before. Out of common experience and so rather than puppy-like.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Who would be machiavellian in marrying? And who would want to marry to get money? Power or connections. And the happiness of the wife is of no consideration whatever. But Aristotle thinks of course of something different -- it is a marriage which will have the properness as it will for children, for future citizens, and it is not a machiavellian consideration.

Student: I don't see why a specialist in such things as marriages can't serve as well as the individual people.

Strauss: But the question is where does this counsellor get his value?

Student: From the analysis of the projected means, not only of the individual but of society.

Strauss: The means I suppose as they are understood by that society.

Student: Yes.

Strauss: And the point is, with what right can he do that as a scientific man. The American marriage counsellor will have different advice than the French marriage counsellor.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: For Aristotle it is all right because it is a matter of practical wisdom, but if we speak of science, then these differences should not play such a fundamental role.

Student: But what of the importance of the prudent man's abilities seeming to be limited to his own life?

Strauss: Oh, no, that comes in later.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But of course he will stay out of political decisions or decisions referring to the polis. The relation of prudence to politics will be taken up later. But for example he has enough money to have a (inaudible) event or whatever it may be. Which of these things should he do? This decision is not a technical decision. The technical decisions will come in (inaudible). But whether this or that -- that is not a technical decision. It is a decision with a view to what is the city most in need of and what would adorn the city to the highest degree.

Student: Wouldn't the man who is best able to make this decision best able to give advice to friends?

Strauss: But there is only this point. There are people who are better in advising others than in advising themselves. The prudent man belongs perhaps to the man advising himself, because it is this -- if you do not have the burden, the responsibility, you are less bound by the responsibility and it is from this point of view easier to advise. So the prudent man belongs perhaps to the man advising himself, and not to the man advising others.

Now 1140a, 30. So altogether the prudent man would be the man good at deliberating.

Reader: "But no one deliberates about things that cannot vary. Nor about things not within his power. Hence, inasmuch as scientific knowledge involves demonstration, whereas things whose fundamental principle is variable are not capable of demonstration because everything about them is variable, and inasmuch as one cannot deliberate about things that are of necessity, it follows that prudence is not the same as science, nor can it be the same as art. It is not science because matters of conduct have variation, and not art because doing and making are generically different, since making aims at an end distinct from the act of making, whereas in doing the end cannot be other than the act itself. Doing well is itself the end."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So in practical wisdom doing well in the sense of acting well is itself the end, whereas in art, as we have said before, the product as distinguished from the productive activity, is the end. For instance, not the desirable consequences, courteous conduct, but courteous conduct itself, is the end. The consequences of courteous conduct are by no means irrelevant, but they are not the end.

Student: Is this identification of art and production Aristotle's last words, because it would seem there could be something which could be called art and would not be strictly speaking production.

Strauss: If you take such an activity as poetry, for instance, is there not a product?

Student: In this case, . . .

Strauss: The Iliad is something different from Homer's making. Now is the song sung something different -- here you cannot make that distinction. The song sung is implied in the singing.

Student: I don't understand. Are you saying that there is a difference between flute playing and poetry writing? In other words, one is a thing in itself and the other produces something? Flute playing produces something.

Strauss: What does it produce?

Student: It produces two things. It produces in the first place music and it produces in one way or another a music which has a result in the mind of the listener.

Strauss: Yes, and it is intended for this purpose. And this is probably the way in which Aristotle would argue. Aristotle would probably argue along these lines.

Student: (Inaudible . . .) that flute playing is actually production. Doesn't he use that example at the beginning of the Ethics, in the few pages where he has flute playing and production . . .

Strauss: But this is of course a preliminary distinction.

Reader: "It remains therefore that it is a truth attaining rational quality concerned with actions in relation to things that are good and bad for human beings."

Strauss: Now wait a moment. Yes, I'm sorry. Go on.

Reader: "Men like Pericles possess the faculty of discerning what things are good for themselves and for mankind, and that is our conception of an expert in economy or political science."

Strauss: Now what does it mean -- I mean that Pericles was a sensible man. Pericles was an emphatically sensible man; this is the impression we all get when we read (inaudible). But Aristotle gives a peculiar interpretation to this sensibility. Pericles was a man who was able to grasp what was good for him and for human beings in general. And would this not make prudence something very selfish, that he was able to discover what was good for him, and is it not much more important to discern what was good for Athens. How would Aristotle explain that? His activity for Athens is the meaning of Pericles' whole life, and therefore there is nothing selfish in this involved.

One can also think of the passage in the (inaudible) speech -- we love wisdom with and we love the beautiful without softness. This is the maxim to which Pericles dedicated himself and his

Athens, and this end was not for the sake of something else, and it was meant to be that having dedicated yourself to these, it was of course meant to be good for Athens, but this end in itself was no longer in need of another end or justification.

Reader: "This also accounts for the word 'moderation' which signifies preserving prudence."

Strauss: This is a kind of entemological play on the part of Aristotle. Aristotle probably did not think it was mere play. The Greek word 'sōphrosynē', which we ordinarily translate by moderation, sometimes also by temperance, is understood to be here a composite of the two words , saving, preserving sense, practical wisdom, prudence."

Reader: "Moderation does in fact preserve our belief as to our own good for pleasure and pain do not destroy or pervert all beliefs, for example, the belief that the three angles of a triangle are not together equal to two right angles, but only beliefs concerning action. The first principles of action are the ends to which our acts are mean. A man corrupted by a love of pleasure or a fear of pain entirely fails to discern any first principle and cannot see that he ought to choose and do everything in the mean to this end and for its sake. For vice tends to destroy the first principle. It therefore follows that prudence is a truth-attaining rational quality concerned with action in relation to the things that are good."

Strauss: So he goes somewhat deeper into the question of the peculiarity of moral virtue or its rational ingredient, prudence. Prudence, in contradistinction to science or art, is threatened by low desire. For prudence consists essentially in controlling desire. Therefore prudence is inseparable from moral virtue, namely from the habitual control of low desires. This kind of danger does not exist in the case of the other intellectual virtues. And you can also make this clear in case of politics in particular where such things like ambition necessarily enter and destroy judgment. This cannot in the same way happen or is at least not essential danger in the arts and also in science. In politics the danger is essential. Therefore we look for the character of men in politics more than elsewhere.

Student: Is this accidental or is there some reason for this? Aristotle gave us the example of a man who has the virtue of practical wisdom (inaudible . . .). And he doesn't give us any examples of men who have the other virtues.

Strauss: Which virtues?

Student: Any of the moral virtues.

Strauss: He doesn't have many other examples; that is true. But here the examples are particularly important -- the two he gives here. But I would like to postpone it until we come to the passage.

Reader: "Moreover, we can speak of excellence in art but not excellence in prudence. Also in art, voluntary error is not as bad as involuntary error and in the sphere of prudence it is worse, as it is in the sphere of the virtues. It is therefore clear that prudence is an excellence or virtue and not an art.. Of the two parts of the soul possessed of reason, prudence must be the virtue of one, namely the part that forms opinions."

Strauss: You see here (inaudible) occurs; and this is where the connection with Plato comes in.

Reader: "For opinion deals with that which can vary and so does prudence, but yet prudence is not a rational quality merely as shown by the fact that a purely rational faculty can be forgotten, whereas a failure in prudence is not a mere lapse of memory."

Strauss: If we limit ourselves to the last point, you have learned an art, whatever that art may be, and you may forget it, but being sensible, you cannot forget that. That is Aristotle's assertion.

We can illustrate it in our language as follows. We can forget all kinds of things. But one thing is impossible without losing our character completely, and that is our duty. If we forget our duty, if we forget our conscience or whatever we call it, that's impossible. Similar to that is what Aristotle has here in mind.

The key point -- practical wisdom is not an art, and the ultimate reason for that is the inseparable connection between practical wisdom and moral virtue. No such connection consists between moral virtue and art.

Reader: "Scientific knowledge is a mode of conception dealing with universals. . . ."

Strauss: We do not have to read this whole section; what he makes clear in the next chapter is -- he speaks of the faculty by which the highest principles as such are perceived, and this faculty is translated by the intellect. Let us read the next chapter. 1141a,9.

Reader: "The term 'wisdom' is employed in the arts to denote those men who are the most perfect masters of their art. For example, it is applied to Phidias as a sculptor and to Polycletus as a statuary."

Strauss: You see then that Aristotle chooses the example from

what we would call the fine arts today. The fine arts are to a higher degree arts than the (inaudible) arts because they are more exact, more precise. Yes?

Reader: "In this use then wisdom merely signifies artistic excellence, but we also think that some people are wise in general and not in one department, and not wise in something else, as Homer says in the Margites."

Neither a delver nor a ploughman him the gods
have made nor wise in ought decide.

Hence it is clear that wisdom must be the most perfect of the modes of knowledge. The wise man therefore must not only know the conclusions that follow from his first principles but also have a true conception of those principles themselves. Hence wisdom must be a combination of intellect and scientific knowledge. It must be a knowledge possessing a head of the most exalted object.

Strauss: This is then the highest intellectual stage of which man is capable, called wisdom, and this consists of intellect, the grasp of the principles, and science, the ability to deduce from these principles, to demonstrate from these principles, secondary truths.

Reader: "For it is strange to think that political science is the loftiest kind of knowledge inasmuch as man is not the highest thing in the world."

Strauss: So Aristotle reminds us here of the fact that in Book X, the end of the work, sophia, theoretical wisdom, is the highest, and therefore politics, political knowledge, cannot claim its place. The supremacy of politics which Aristotle rejects is the same as the supremacy of morality. This would require that the highest known being is man; that is implied in what he says here. Since man is not the best being in the universe, politics and morality cannot be the highest. In a way this conclusion that the highest known being is man is in the teaching of Kant. Because of God we do not have any theoretical knowledge, so the highest being known to us according to Kant is man, and Kant could say in some passages of pure reason, that all the philosophic questions or the fundamental philosophic questions point to one and the same question and that question is what is man? What is man is the philosophic question -- not so for Aristotle. This is illustrated by this Aristotelian remark here.

Reader: "And as wholesome and good being one thing for man and another for fishes, whereas white and straight mean the same thing always, so everybody would denote the same thing by wise but not by prudence. For each kind of being will describe as prudent and will entrust itself to one who can discern his own particular welfare. Hence even some of the lower animals are said to be prudent. Namely, those which display a

capacity for forethought as regards their own lives."

Strauss: And let us stop here for one moment. So prudence, practical wisdom, and morality, are essentially relative to man. The theoretical things do not have such an essential relative to man. Aristotle gives here the examples of "white" and "straight." Let us limit ourselves to the example of white. What has happened to "white" in modern times? Well, white became the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. White colors belong of course to the secondary qualities, and they are relative to the different living beings, in particular to man. So that the theoretical qualities proper which have no relativity to man, according to this Lockian view, are only the primary qualities.

But for Aristotle the main point here is to bring out the relativity of prudence to man. What is true of the good of which he speaks here is also true of the noble and the just. They are not relative to this or that individual -- that of course not. But to man as man. And Aristotle brings this out by the strong sentence that the other qualities would be the same for man as for fishes, without wondering whether the fishes actually perceive these qualities. But this was not ---- his primary concern. The primary concern was no relativity to man.

. Let us continue where we left off.

Reader: "It is also clear that wisdom cannot be the same thing as political science, for if we are to call knowledge of our own interests wisdom, there will be a number of different kinds of wisdom, one for each species, and there cannot be a single such wisdom dealing with the good of every living thing, any more than there is one art of medicine for all existing things."

Strauss: So in other words, if someone would say that practical wisdom is the highest, then he would have to answer the question, which practical wisdom? The practical wisdom for a man, for a lion, the practical wisdom for servants, because of this relativity. In the case of theoretical wisdom, the question does not arise.

Student: How does this fit in with what Aristotle says sometimes about the fact that all human beings have as their end somehow a service to man?

Strauss: Where does he say that?

Student: I think at one point near the beginning of the *Politics*. In other words, you mean that in the light of this hierarchic order, of all subhuman beings, the difficulty would disappear. But what about this relativity? This hierarchy? All beings on earth in the service of man. It makes sense for that of the domestic animals and a few other things. But what about the many other

animals which are dysfunctional? From this point of view. There is only one way out of this difficulty and this is to say that all animals are for the sake of man, but not necessarily for his practical use, but also for the use as possible objects of his understanding. I.e., of his wisdom, theoretical wisdom, which is not merely human because it does not have this concern with the specifically human.

Student: What about the remark of Aristotle that the soul is in a way all things? Wouldn't that mean that man is in a way (inaudible)?

Strauss: Yes, that is -- you assume rightly that when he speaks of the soul there, he means the human soul. But if there are quite a few things which are lower -- man is a microcosm, you can state it with that. This means also that the soul is in a way the inanimate thing. The inanimate things and the vegetative world which are lower than the human soul. Now if there is a being possible which has only the intellect and not all things, would this not be a higher being than man? That would be God.

Student: Or angels.

Strauss: Or angels. But in Aristotle there are no angels. You could say the stars as gods. Now will you go on.

Reader: "It may be argued that man is superior to the other animals, but this makes no difference, since there exist other things far more divine in their nature than man. For instance, to mention the things most visible, the things of which the cosmos is composed."

Strauss: He means the stars, and the stars understood as living beings. For the very respectable reason that when we look up, we see here moved things, things which are not obviously pushed or pulled, but moving from their own inner impulse. Living beings. Living beings, and therefore of much finer substance than any living being here on earth and with a certain disregard of difficulty which we are but too aware, gods. And this was a question discussed later on, partly on the basis of Aristotle himself, whether these heavenly bodies do not also possess or are not related to intellects guiding them. This would then be an Aristotelian substitute for the Greek hunters.

Reader: "These considerations therefore show that wisdom is scientific knowledge and intellect as regards to things of the most exalted nature. This is why people say that men like Anaxagoras and Thales may be wise but are not prudent, for they see them display ignorance of their own interest, and while admitting them to possess a knowledge which is rare, marvelous,

difficult, and even superhuman, they have declared this knowledge to be useless because these sages do not seem to know the things which are good for human beings."

Strauss: These are the opposite points. Pericles and Thales. Thales looked at the stars and fell into a ditch. So he was wholly unable to take care of his own affairs and from this perspective a ridiculous individual. Yet from Aristotle's point of view higher than Pericles.

Student: But if he discovered water when he fell into the ditch?

Strauss: No, but he showed to his countrymen that he could take care of himself if he wanted. This speculation regarding the all-present -- do you mean that?

But we must not forget that this indifference to the human things is always beyond phronesis and means always beyond morality. In b, 14.

Reader: "Nor is prudence a knowledge of general principles only. It must also take account of particular facts since it is concerned with action and deals with particular things."

Strauss: Now this is a somewhat strange remark because we have been sufficiently trained by Aristotle to take this for granted, that practical wisdom will have to do primarily with particular cases and not with generalities. For example, is this conduct here proper conduct? That is the question to be decided by practical wisdom. But what is an example of a generality supplied by practical wisdom. Some practically important things are of a general or universal character. As distinguished from the particular one, what to do here now?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: It could be, but it would not be a good Aristotelian example. It would not be good because it is subject to some qualifications. For example in war it is all right to steal.

Another Student: One should have a good upbringing. I mean that would seem to be practical wisdom for parents.

Strauss: Yes. One can say that. But does this give us sufficient indication. What does properly mean here?

Student: The philosophic way of life is the best way of life.

Strauss: Yes, well, that goes beyond everything. But a more simple one -- for example, we read in the Book I a brief discussion of wealth and honour as the highest objectives of life. To realize

that this is not the case is surely not a matter of theoretical wisdom but of practical wisdom, and yet not of the practical wisdom concerned with the question of here and now, but with the whole of life.

Now let us turn to the next chapter which is of very great importance to us, b, 22.

Reader: "Prudence is indeed the same quality of mind as political science."

Strauss: Political science is hard to translate -- political ability, the political art; in Greek an adjective without a noun. The only guide you have is that the noun must be in the same gender as the adjective, but both *epistēmē* and (inaudible) and (inaudible) are as feminine as *politeia*. There you have a choice. Begin again please.

Reader: "Prudence is indeed the same quality of mind as political science, though their essence is different. Of prudence as regards the city, one kind, a supreme and directive, is called legislative kind, and the other, in dealing with particular occurrences, has the name political science that really belongs to both kinds. The latter is concerned with action and deliberation, for a vote of enactment is a thing to be done, being the last step in the deliberative process, and this is why it is only those persons who deal with particular facts who are spoken of as taking part in politics. Because it is only they who perform actions like the workmen in an industry."

Strauss: In other words, we do not say of the legislators that they are engaged in politics because they are concerned with framing a code for all time, so to speak, and they are not engaged in here and now decisions. Our notion of legislator is misleading then. Yes?

(The first half of the tape ran out at this point.)

Strauss: Yes, science -- one can use it in the loose meaning of the term. Deliberative understanding, judicial understanding, and it might be better to bring out the kinship with being sensible as distinguished from possessing a science. Now what would seem to have the highest rank of these kindred phenomena? We have the being sensible of the private man in his own affairs and we have the man who extends it beyond himself in the narrower sense to his family, and then he is the manager of his household, but still larger than these a positive course, a man understanding the affairs of his city, and there are various stages there, for example, a man may be good enough as a juryman and may be very sensible there, but not good enough in the assembly, in the policy-making assembly, and a man may be good enough at that, but would not be able to elaborate a code, say

for a colony to be sent out to Sicily or elsewhere. Now what would be the highest then in this diversity of forms? That being sensible can take. What would you say?

Student: The legislator.

Strauss: Yes, but let us see what follows.

Reader: "Knowledge of one's own interest will certainly be one kind of prudence, though it is very different from the other kinds, and people think that the man who knows and who minds his own business is prudent, and that politicians are busybodies. Thus Euripides writes: Would that be prudent when I might live a quiet life, a (inaudible) from the crowds, sharing the common fortune, restless, aspiring, busy men of action."

"For people seek their own good and suppose that it is right to do so; hence this belief has caused the word 'prudence' to be known for the wise in their own interest."

Strauss: In other words, here Aristotle makes the tentative case for the view that the man concerned with his own good is more sensible than the others. According to the popular view that the politicians are busybodies and interfere with the affairs of other people. But how does the argument go on?

Reader: "Yet probably as a matter of fact, a man cannot pursue his own welfare without domestic economy and without political life."

So probably the Greek word is again that isos -- one never knows what Aristotle means by it, whether he is truly dubitative or whether he is only obeying in order to avoid a dogmatic assertion. So we have to leave it in the family.

Reader: "Moreover, even in the proper conduct of one's own affairs is a difficult problem and requires consideration."

Strauss: So it is not so simple then to draw the line between one's own affairs and the affairs of others. At least you must have friends.

Now these were the main passages that some of you should read. There is a very important chapter later on at the end of the work, 1143b, 18, practically at the end of the book, but I don't believe that the time is now disposed to read that.

Perhaps we have a kind of free discussion of the fundamental difficulty concerning practical wisdom, of the question of the status of the principles which we follow if we act sensibly.

So there is no such thing as a conscience in Aristotle. The word doesn't exist. A kind of innate faculty guides us. This is something acquired and acquired in the proper kind of breeding. But then of course we must have a standard which enables us to distinguish the proper kind of breeding and the improper one. How do we get that?

In the first book, when Aristotle gives his greater scientific definition of happiness, he says it consists in doing the work of man well, so what is implied there is this. There is a nature of man, an essence of man, and this nature points to its peculiar perfection, just as the acorn points to the oak, and the kitten points to the cat. Only in the case of man is this all much more complicated. The human body is relatively simple but the human mind is quite complicated, but still Aristotle would say that there is such a thing as respectability or decency recognized with variations everywhere, and even the disreputable people recognize it, and even if they refer to themselves as crooks only they don't find it wrong to be crooks.

There is then some awareness of these things and this awareness Aristotle is trying to develop in this work. One can say there is a kind of unwritten law of proper conduct, and Aristotle articulates this in his Ethics.

But still this perhaps might not be sufficient. Aristotle makes a distinction, at which he leaves the matter, between happiness and moral virtue. All men want happiness. This is the clear starting point of the whole reflection of Aristotle. And somehow moral virtue seems to be a means for becoming happy. But that is not quite the way in which we are to look at it. I think I read to you a passage which may help you when you think about these matters.

I take it from Cicero's work on the Ends of Good and Bad Things, Book 3, paragraphs or sections 20 to 25. Now this is official stoic teachings. According to their teaching, you must begin from the principles of nature, from the beginnings which nature has led in us.

"Man's first attraction is toward the things in accordance with nature, but as soon as he has attained toward understanding and has discerned the order, and so to speak the harmony, that should go on conduct, he then esteems this harmony far more highly than all the things for which he originally held an affection." And so on. . .

We cannot read this now; you might read it at home. Something like self-preservation is the basis from which all life, or moral life, starts. But then while we pursue our self-preservation, we become aware that for the sake of self-preservation, we must cultivate our minds and do other things. And at a later stage

we become aware that what originally came in only as a means is higher in rank than that which is served. This transformation of the means to an end, or something like that, is assumed also in Aristotle. The primary desire is the desire for happiness, but this desire becomes practically identical with the desire for noble conduct, and what noble conduct is, we see by looking around, by observing ourselves and especially people of refinement. And what this means is not too difficult to understand. Everyone, however crude or coarse, will come into situations from time to time, where he will see what crudeness and coarseness is, and therefore by implication, and how unnice they are, and therefore by implication what refinement is.

So I must leave it at this. This is now the last meeting of this course and I wish you a nice summer and a pleasant vacation.

Lecture XVII
Aristotle's Ethics, April 17, 1968

Strauss: Now let us turn to our summary readings of the sections from Book IV. I remind you again of the whole context. Aristotle suggests by his own writing that one cannot understand political things as political things if one is not able to evaluate them properly. Well, if you know everything about socialized medicine, except whether it is good or bad, you know nothing about socialized medicine. And the same is also true of other subjects.

Now in order to evaluate them properly one must have a standard and not an arbitrary standard, and that means in Aristotle's language a natural standard. The natural standard is determined by the purpose of political society. The purpose of political society, as he sees not here but in the Politics, is the good life -- not mere life or satisfaction or adjustment or law and order. The good life is the life of human excellence, of virtue. And therefore in order to judge intelligently about political matters, we should have a full articulation of this standard. What is virtue? And what are the particular virtues? If we have this goal before us with the greatest possible clarity, we are better judges of political things than without it.

Now this presentation of all the virtues is given by Aristotle in Books III to V. This presentation does not go without saying. If we consider the various virtues praised or blamed, in Aristotle's time or for that matter in any later time, we see that Aristotle makes a selection, and this is still more emphasized by the fact that there is an order, an arrangement, according to which some of the virtues are lower in rank than others, and if one considers both the selection and the arrangement, one can discern what one may call the spirit of Aristotle. By simply saying which virtues does he consider and what place does he assign to each of the virtues he mentions?

Now we have seen that he begins this discussion with courage and then he speaks of moderation. Both virtues have to do with affection which we share with the brutes. It means they are lower in this respect.

Then he turns to liberality, the virtue regarding expense, i.e., money, something which is by this very fact human. Brutes don't have money. Although it is possible to make a will in favor of one's favorite cat, and yet this doesn't work out as if you had left it to a human being.

I think we should consider a few more passages. We turn perhaps to 1121a,8.

Reader: "The prodigal, on the other hand, errors in his feelings with regard to money as well as in his actions. He feels neither

pleasure nor pain on the right occasions nor in the right manner. This will become clearer as we proceed. We have said then that prodigality and means are modes of excess and deficiency, and this in two things, giving and getting. Giving being taken to include spending. Prodigality exceeds in giving without getting and is deficient in getting. Means fall short in giving and goes to excess in getting, only not on the great scale. Now the two forms of prodigality are very seldom found united in the same person, because it is not easy to give to everyone without receiving from anyone. The giver's means are soon exhausted if he is a private citizen and only such persons are considered prodigals. In fact, a man who is prodigal in both ways may be thought considerably superior to the mean man for he is easily cured by age or by poverty, and is able to be brought to the due mean because he possesses the essentials of the liberal character. He gives and he refrains from taking, but he does neither in the proper way nor rightly. Correct this by training or otherwise reforming and he will be liberal, for he will now give his money to the right objects and he will not get it from the wrong sources. This is why he is thought to be not really bad, for to exceed in giving without getting is foolish rather than evil or innoble. The prodigal of this type therefore seems to be much superior to the mean man, both for the reasons stated and because the former benefits many people and the latter benefits nobody, not even himself."

Strauss: Let us stop here. So the prodigal is to be preferred to the stingy one. I think that we can still understand it despite the fact that we have -- are -- subject to the puritan ethics as it has been called, as the soul of the capitalist society.

Prodigality is not base, strictly speaking, but rather foolish. The prodigals are thought to help many others -- this is the impression -- and sometimes he may really give something to a man who deserves it, although it is a bit accidental in his case. But the stingy ones do not help anyone nor even themselves. This is an important point here that Aristotle makes.

A little bit later in 1121b,12-16, we might read.

Reader: "Meanness, on the contrary, is incurable. We see that it can be caused by old age or any form of weakness. Also, it is more ingrained in man's nature than prodigality. The mass of men are avaricious rather than open-handed."

Strauss: Let us stop here. In other words, stinginess and laziness is in a way more liberal than liberality or prodigality. Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on the passage, speaks here of a natural inclination. Aristotle made an earlier remark in 1119a, 20-23, about cowardice, that cowardice is somehow more natural than overboldness. The fear of death is an important ingredient of our make-up; similarly, to stick to what is his own

and to protect it, for this we have a natural inclination. And this has to be considered in our own judgments.

Somewhat later on, in b,31 following, he speaks of tyrants, the subject which we discussed briefly last time.

Reader: "The other sort of people are those who exceed in respect of getting, taking from every source and all they can. Such are those who follow the degrading trades, brothel keepers and people of those sort, and petty usurers who lend money in small sums at a high rate of interest. All these take from wrong sources and more than their due. The common characteristic of all these seems to be (inaudible) since they all endure reproach for gain and for a small gain. Those who make improper gains from improper sources on a great scale, for instance princes who sack cities and rob temples . . . "

Strauss: Tyrants. In other words, he follows Machiavelli.

Reader: " . . . tyrants that sack cities and rob temples are not mean but rather wicked or unjust."

Strauss: Let's leave it at that. In other words, there are distinctions, very fine distinctions, even within hell. And to be mean is something very low and the tyrant is much meaner than that. What he does the ordinary mean man would not do. So meanness is not, well, the worst thing, and the worst vice which a man can have. The extreme of this goes much further.

Now another point which we might mention here is this. This has been stated before -- that expense must correspond to the greatness of the being with a view to which the expenses are made. And he gives two examples of this. First, gods and heroes, secondly, the polis, so the expense for (inaudible) and for the adornment of the city are the proper objects of liberality. And this implies, as Aristotle makes clear, that a poor or an obscure man, need not be liberal in the full sense of the word. There is a certain lack of propriety even an obscure man makes himself the benefactor of the city by such means, by the building of temples or any other thing of this kind.

So Aristotle takes only his (inaudible), that there are certain virtues which, at least in the highest form, are inaccessible to poor people, and this though cannot be helped, and Aristotle's comfort would be that there is something much higher than moral virtue, namely intellectual perfection, which is accessible even to poor people.

Now let us read 1123a, 28. That is the end of the section on liberality.

Reader: "The poultry man on the other hand will fare on the side of deficiency in everything. Even when he is spending a great deal, he will spoil the effect for a trifle by hesitating at every stage and considering how he can spend the least and even so grudging what he spends, and always thinking he is doing things on a greater scale than is necessary. These dispositions then are vices and do not bring serious discredit, since they are not injurious to others nor are they accessibly unseen."

Strauss: We have read the lesson before. As to the end which the virtues serve -- that the virtuous actions are ends in themselves we know. Nevertheless, they have ends. We see for example if a certain vice does damage to one's neighbor, this is a more serious vice than if it does not do such damage. So in the consideration of the ends of virtue, you must never forget that he does not speak of it thematically, but he has always this in mind as can be seen.

The two overall ends which Aristotle considers we can say on the basis of this passage is whether this habit is useful to others and the others means in the highest case the city, and when it is becoming to the doer. Something may be unbecoming to the doer and yet not harmful and vice versa.

Now we come to one of the most important sections of the Ethics, the discussion of magnanimity. The context is this. Aristotle has spoken first of courage and moderation, and then he has gone over to the two virtues connected with wealth, liberality and prodigality. Magnificence. So magnificence has to do with great expenses and liberality with relatively small expenses. And now he turns to the virtues which have to do with honors, and there is one regarding high honors and one regarding not high honors. The virtue regarding high honors is magnanimity. And this is one of the central passages of the Ethics, as you will see in the few passages which we will read.

Now let us read the beginning first.

Reader: "(Inaudible . . .) magnanimity . . ."

Strauss: Both are equally good -- I mean one is lacking and the other is (inaudible).

Reader: "Great as the soul as the word itself implies, seems to be related to great objects. Let us first ascertain what sort of objects these are. It will make no difference whether we examine the habit itself or whether we examine the person who displays the habit."

Strauss: The habit itself meaning magnanimity, and the one who

acts according to the habit, that doesn't make any difference.

Reader: "Now a person is thought to be great soul if he claims much and deserves much. He who claims much without deserving it is foolish, and no one of moral ability is foolish or senseless. The great soul of man is then as we have described. He who deserves little and claims little is modest but not great soul. The great soul involves greatness just as beauty involves size. All people may be neat and well-made, but not beautiful. He that claims much but not deserves much is vain, though not everybody who claims more than he deserves is vain. He that claims less than he deserves is small soul, and whether his deserves be great or only modest, even though he deserves little if he claims still less. The most small soul of all would seem to be the man who claims less than he deserves when his deserves are great. So what would he have done if he had not deserved so much? Though therefore in regard to the greatness of his claim, the great soul of man is an extreme, by reason of its correctness, he stands at the mean point for he claims what he deserves."

Strauss: The point which we have to emphasize is this. There is a man who is not worthy of high honours. Aristotle denies that. And acts accordingly. This is not a vicious man. The ingredient is sophro which we literally translate by moderate but modest makes good sense here. Thus modesty is a virtue. But it is a lower virtue than magnanimity itself than a man who deserves great honour judges rightly about this subject and acts accordingly, by claiming these high honours.

Do you see any other point which you would like to take up in this connection?

So there are virtues to which even most ordinarily virtuous men have no access -- that is important.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Give me an example to make it clear.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And also considering his views and his early death, one wouldn't call him vain. This is another complication which arises because we are here near a peak of the whole Ethics and a certain ambiguity cannot be avoided.

Reader: "If then the great soul of man claims and is worthy of great things, and most of all the greatest things, the greatness of soul must be concerned with some one object especially. Worthy is a term of relation, and denotes having a claim to good

external to oneself. Now the greatest external good we should assume to be the thing which we offer as a tribute to the gods which is most coveted by men of high station, and this is the prize awarded for the noblest deeds. Such a thing is honour, for honour is clearly the greatest and external good. Therefore, the great soul of man is he who has the right disposition in relation to honours and disgraces. And even if that argument could be (inaudible), that honour is the subject of which the great soul of men are concerned, and it is honour above all else which great men claim and deserve."

Strauss: We can say the munificent man is the only one who honours the gods properly because the gifts which he makes and the temples which he builds are appropriate to the gods, then the magnanimous man behaves like the gods.

Now a little bit later in 33. And if we look at the phenomenon in every respect, it would appear that the magnanimous man would be altogether ridiculous if he were not (inaudible), whereas . . .

Reader: "Moreover, if he were bad he would not be worthy of honour."

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Reader: "It enhances their greatest and it cannot exist without them."

Strauss: This is a unique statement. Aristotle does not say this of any of the other virtues. Only of magnanimity. Magnanimity is the peak of the virtues. It presupposes all the other virtues and gives them a splendor, which without it they would not have. It says in the sequel virtue is altogether perfect.

Now there is another peak in the Ethics apart from the section on magnanimity, and that is the section on justice, the beginning of the fifth book. We can say that the Aristotelian moral universe has two peaks, one magnanimity, and the other justice. And magnanimity is the peak of morality from the point of view of the individual himself, the highest action. Whereas justice is the peak from the point of view of man's relation to other human beings. Aristotle leaves the distinction at this without trying to make it more simple, less questionable. Such is life, that there are these two points of view. There is a conflict between them, but there is a different orientation.

Now let us look at a few examples. 1124b, 9.

Reader: "He is (inaudible) on conferring benefits, but ashamed to receive them, because the former is a mark of superiority and the latter of inferiority. He returns a service done to him with interest and will put the original benefactor into his debt

in turn and make him the party benefitted. The great souls are thought to have a good memory for any benefit they have conferred but a bad memory for those that they have received, since the recipient of a benefit is the inferior of his benefactor and has a great desire to be superior, and they are said to enjoy being reminded of the former, but to dislike being reminded of the latter. This is why the poet Thetis did not specify her services to do, nor did the Spartans treating with the Athenians recall the occasions when Sparta had aided Athens, and not which Athens had aided Sparta."

Strauss: It is very different from our feelings today, but go on.

Reader: "It is also characteristic of the great soul of man never to ask help from others, or only with reluctance, but to come to aid willingly, and to be hardy toward men of positions and function but courteous toward those of moderate station because it is difficult and distinguished to be superior to the great but easy to outdo the lowly, and to adopt a high manner with the former, (inaudible), but it is vulgar to lord it over humble people. It is like putting forth one's strength against the weak. He will not compete for the common objects of ambition or go where other people take the first place and he will be idle and slow to act except when pursuing some high honor. And he will not engage in many undertakings but only such which are important. He must be open both in love and in hate, since concealment shows timidity, and care more for the truth than for what people will think, and speak and act openly, since as he despises other men, he is outspoken and frank, except when speaking with ironical self-depreciation. He will be incapable at living at the will of another, except a friend, since to do so is slavish. Hence flatterers are always servile and humble people are flatterers."

Strauss: Now I think that this is intelligible and it does not require much of a comment except to emphasize that this is counter to our feelings at certain points -- our feelings have been molded with the tradition, and it is quite interesting to see how Thomas Aquinas discusses this matter and how he tries to bring it into harmony with a different morality. In the present time you find interpreters to say that Aristotle is not simply an admirer of the magnanimous man, but that there is quite a bit of irony in that. I think that is not true.

In a way one can say the whole Ethics is ironical because it does not look at the moral phenomenon from the highest point of view. The bulk of the Ethics at least. Irony is a word which is so common today, but occurs rarely in Aristotle, but this is one of the first references to it. The magnanimous man is the private man because of his greater being of himself, and he

is in no way a coward. Not the moral coward in particular. But there are certain situations in which he is ironical, and ironical means dissembling. He dissembles his superiority when talking to inferior people, because it would be too cheap a triumph to be recognized as superior to one who is manifestly inferior.

And a little later on in 1125a. 5-9.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Because it is a lesser virtue.

Student: What about the problem of irony never being treated as a vice.

Strauss: Yes, but that is another side of the complexity. Irony as such, that is a lack of veracity, and that is a vice. But in certain circumstances it is not a vice. One can make the transition even when he speaks of the irony later on thematically. He makes it clear that while it is a vice, it is a graceful vice, more graceful at any rate than its opposite, speaking of the boaster -- the other quality. The truthful man who doesn't say more about himself than is the case, and then there is the boaster, and then there is the heroic man. Now the boaster man is very obnoxious and compared with him the ironical man is the graceful man, although it is not the perfectly right thing. If he understates his work in order to flatter the powerful people, then he is a (inaudible), but if he does it in order not to hurt other people's feelings, this would be a different case. A man who is walking around and trying to impress or oppress his fellows by showing off his abilities is an obnoxious man. And therefore the man who conceals his superiority in order not to hurt other people's feelings is in the worst case a vice.

But the transition from a graceful vice to an ingredient of virtue is remarkably easy. Think of a man of very high superiority, as a magnanimous man does of course, confronted with people who are manifestly inferior, and then it would be proper in these circumstances. One must always consider the circumstances, and Aristotle was perhaps the first to state this question so powerfully and we should also give him the benefit of the doubt.

In Greek it is (inaudible). gossip, the man who talks about human beings.

Reader: "He is no gossip because he will not talk either about other people or about himself, and hence neither wants to receive compliments nor to hear other people run down, nor is he lavish of praise either. And so he is not given to speaking evil himself, even of his enemies, except when he deliberately intends to give offense."

Strauss: Yes, except out of deliberateness, out of (inaudible) pride. This is one of the passages which Thomas Aquinas also tries to explain away. The virtuous man doesn't have insolent pride under any conditions. But it is not quite Aristotle's view.

For example, Thomas Aquinas explains this passage as follows: we will not speak ill of enemies except in order to repel an injury, in other words, as part of the war-like action of defense. That things are not mitigated unnecessarily. Aristotle means that they use insolent pride under some conditions. For example, Achilles regarding Agamemnon. That is the case of hubris of a magnanimous man. Or in our age when Churchill in his speech at (inaudible) called Hitler a (inaudible), this was of course also such an act. After all, Hitler was more powerful at that time than Churchill was, and (inaudible) was not an unworthy action but because it is stated in advance of the truth, the final judgment.

Now let us see in 1125a, 19.

Reader: "Such then being the great soul of man, the corresponding character on the side of deficiency is the small soul of man. And a man of excess is a vain man. These also are not thought to be actually vicious because they do no harm, but rather mistaken. The small soul of man . . ."

Strauss: So, in other words, in Aristotle -- I mean if we call utilitarian an ethics which deals only with farming and herding, Aristotle would say that is too narrow. They are qualities which in themselves are neither harmful nor helping, and yet are ugly distortions. For example, the vain man -- he is mostly harmless -- except if his vanity is hurt, then the situation becomes different. But then it is no longer the vain man, but the situation. Now read on.

Reader: "The small soul of man deprives himself of the good things that he deserves, and to say (inaudible) good things makes it seem that there is something bad about it, and also that he does not know himself. For people say if he deserves any good, he would try to obtain it, not that such persons are considered foolish but rather retiring. Yet this estimate of them are thought to make them still worse, for man's ambitions show when they are worse, and if they hold aloof from noble enterprises in pursuit and forego the good things of life, they think they are not worthy of them."

Strauss: Even shyness is a vice, but not a terrible vice. It is a vice because it may prevent a man from doing (inaudible) thing. And especially if you think of it with a statesman, and if this statesman would be shy to run for office.

Reader: "The vain, on the other hand, are foolish persons who are deficient in self-knowledge and expose their defect."

They undertake honourable responsibilities of which they are not worthy, and then are found out. They are ostentatious in dress, manner and so on, for people to know how well off they are and talk about it, and imagining that this can make them respected. Smallness of soul is more opposed than vanity to greatness of soul, and is more prevalent and worse."

Strauss: Worse for the reason given. Because it may prevent a man from actualizing (inaudible). That is only a ridiculous individual, but not a harmful individual.

Student: Why do you say it is more prevalent?

Strauss: Well, that was where the Spartans (inaudible . . .). Most men, Aristotle has said, are given to underestimating themselves. Is this intelligible? It is not even true today that most people do not (inaudible). I mean each are individuals and do not merely think of (inaudible) leaders and such. Well, it is surely a remarkable statement.

I think we should consider two more passages. When he speaks in the sequel of another kind of virtue which has to do with small honours, not great decorations or honours, and it is a proper attitude not to totally despise them because that would be a contempt of that political order, say in France, and on the other hand, to be too eager to display innumerable decorations -- that is ridiculous also. The right thing is to have a few decorations and to exhibit them on the proper occasion.

And then Aristotle goes over to gentleness, which is the proper posture towards anger . . .

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But then having spoken of the right posture toward great expenses, he goes over toward the right posture toward great honours and then to small honours. There is a kind of association here.

(Inaudible . . .) with anger . . . all previous virtues had to do with desire, or for that matter aversion. But not anger. This is the only virtue dealing with anger, this gentleness, and this is here the end of these discussions here.

We can perhaps read 1126a, 29.

Reader: "We consider the excess to be more opposed to gentleness than the defect, because it occurs more frequently, and human nature being more prone to seek redress than to forgive, and because the harsh tempered are worse to live with than the (inaudible)."

Strauss: This being the case, then it follows that the men who are less given to anger than is proper are preferable to those who are more than properly given to anger. In other words, people who don't get angry are very rare, and in addition, from

living together, they are very reasonable.

In the next chapter he deals with what we now call the social virtues in the narrow sense of the term, the virtues belonging to an association of a man's businesslike character -- the social graces -- and there is only one point which we must consider in 1129b, 1.

Reader: "But the fool is one who cannot resist a joke, and will not keep his tongue to himself or anyone else if he can raise a laugh, and will say things which a man of refinement would never say and which he would not even allow to be said to him. The boor is of no use in playful conversation. He contributes nothing and takes offense at everything. Yet relaxation and amusement seem to be a necessary element in life."

Strauss: This is one of the many frequent references to the end of the virtues which would have to be considered coherently if one wants to see that Aristotle's list of virtues as he presents them is exhausting.

Now here we have, for example, desire, fear, and anger. There is money, honour, and then there are also the (inaudible) and playfulness which are a part of life and must be virtues in this respect, too. So we have to put all these considerations together in order to see whether Aristotle exhausts the virtues as he claims he does.

This is then the end of the discussion of the virtues in general and then there is just a brief discussion of those of shame and moral indignation, to which Aristotle denies the status of virtue. Shame in particular is all right with young people, who cannot yet have acquired the habit of (inaudible) and therefore they make mistakes. But for a mature man to blush and to have to blush, that is deplorable. He can never make a mistake, and Aristotle regards it as possible that a man can live throughout his life and never make a mistake. After he has thrown his (inaudible) off, and that was implied here in his discussion of young people.

Student: You pointed out earlier that the sense of shame (inaudible) . . .

Strauss: (Inaudible), a Greek word, does not always have the narrow sense in which Aristotle uses it here. You are blushing because of a blunder one has committed, but it either means from a posture of a kind of holy shame, reverence, and it has this meaning very frequently. For example, in the myth of the Protagoras, Zeus is supposed to have given to all man sense of shame. For Aristotle shame is regarded in the narrow sense, and therefore is something unbecoming a grown-up man.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Oh sure. Aristotle makes allowance for all kinds of intermediate stages, but this does not dubious however the fundamental distinction as he lays them down. A man who acts (inaudible) from sense of shame is not a great man. He must get out of it the sense of the nobility of the action, and not what people will say behind his back or even to his face.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: Piety does not occur as a virtue in Aristotle at all.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: That he does in a well known passage in the *Metaphysics*, when he contrasts his view of the gods with the traditional view, in Book 12 at the end of his theology, and he says fundamentally what the ancestral view was was this notion of god, as Aristotle stated, and they added quite a few things to interest the many and influence them towards obedience to the law. But that is something which does not belong to the gentleman's view, but it belongs to the many.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: And therefore what is wrong with Aristotle's judgment?

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: But that was discussed in the section on magnanimity. Here it is simply a matter of social and (inaudible), and there is no business transacted, no public assembly, and how you behave there properly or gracefully, and then as a man would say "I have not yet published anything," when he has published four articles -- that is not quite right, because he should not make himself smaller than he is, and also the other way around -- if a man has published 500 articles, and (inaudible . . .). But that is the only consideration which comes in here. The ironical man would say I have not published anything although he has published four articles, and then there is something improper -- he does not show the proper frankness, or the proper politeness, to the people coming together, by understating.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: But Aristotle means a shame, that which makes you blush.

Now this is then the end of the discussion of all virtues with the exception of a single one, and that is justice, and to justice the whole Book V is devoted. And that is the discussion of justice that is the second peak of the two peaks of the discussion of moral virtues, and we should read that, and we begin at the beginning.

Reader: "In regard to justice, and injustice, we have to inquire what sort of actions precisely they are concerned with, and in what sense justice is the observance of a mean, and what are the extremes between which that which is just is a mean."

Strauss: Now this question regarding what kind of mean justice is -- in all previous cases Aristotle could find a mean between two faulty extremes, but in the case of justice that is not possible. What is the vice to which justice is opposed? Injustice. And what is the unjust man? In the broadest terms?

Student: An extremist.

Strauss: Yes, but that is too general. He wishes to be benefitted more than he deserves, and he wishes to pay less than he should. Now what about the other fault -- and here you have the just man who says, well, I pay all my taxes and I do not claim any privileges to which I am not entitled, all right, but what about the man who does not stand up for his rights, who takes less than he has a right. Far from taking away from others, he did more for others than he was obliged to do. Is this not also a faulty extreme? The just man standing up for his rights, but only for his rights, and the unjust man standing up for his claims, right or wrong, and then this other nameless man who does not even stand up for his rights. And that is not what Aristotle regarded as a vice, and in this sense justice is not a mean between two extremes. If you demand less than is your due, that is not a vice. Nevertheless, justice is a mean, but not in the simple way in which the other virtues are means between two extremes. That is the meaning of this cumbersome expression.

Now let us go on. Do you wonder how this could be? He will explain this later on.

Reader: "Our inquiry may follow the same procedure as our preceding discussions. Now we observe that everybody means by justice the habit which renders men to do just things and which causes them to act justly, and to wish what is just. Similarly, by injustice, that which makes men act unjustly and wish what is unjust. Let us then assume these things to start with as properly correct. The fact is that it is not the same with habits as with science and faculties. It seems that the given faculty assigned deals with opposite things, but a habit which produces a certain result does not always produce the opposite result. For example, health does not give rise to unhealthy actions, but only the healthy ones."

Strauss: Now what does the distinction between habits and abilities mean? For example a man who can write very quickly and write legibly, can also write very slowly and legibly.

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Now a man who is decent as a habit cannot act indecently. But the man who can act both decent and indecent, and can both use virtue and vice (inaudible), is of course not a decent man. And that is the simple explanation for this. The virtues are habits, and therefore the virtuous man cannot act viciously. Now let us go on.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .). From Aristotle's point of view, practical wisdom has principles of its own and therefore can be treated independently of the wisdom, theoretical wisdom. Socrates and Plato simply deny that (inaudible), and this leads to the consequence that the whole of the thinking life, of philosophy, its premise is practical wisdom. Denying as it were the distinction between *phronēsis* and *sophia*, practical wisdom and wisdom proper, (inaudible . . .) that virtue is knowledge, which Aristotle accepts only in a very qualified sense. Yes?

Reader: "When sometimes the nature of two opposite habits is inferred from the other, sometimes habits are known from the things in which they are found. For example, if we know what good bodily condition is, we know what bad condition is as well. We also know what good condition is from bodies in good condition. And what bodies are in good condition from knowing what good condition is. Thus, supposing good condition is firmness of flesh, bad condition must be flabbiness of flesh, and a diet productive of good condition must be a diet which produces firmness of flesh. Also, if one of two correlative groups of words is used in several senses, it follows as a rule that the other is used in several senses too. For example, if just has more than one meaning, so also has unjust."

Strauss: This is all preparatory and becomes engagable only from the conclusion . . .

Reader: "Now it appears that the terms justice and injustice are used in several senses, but as their (inaudible) uses are closely connected, their equivocation is not detected. Whereas in the case of widely different things, called by a common name, the equivocation is fairly obvious. For example, the difference being considerable when it is one of external form, and the equivocal use of the word key to denote both the bone at the base of the neck and that with which we lock our doors. Let us then ascertain in how many senses a man is said to be unjust. Now the term "unjust" is held to apply both to the man who breaks the law and the man who takes more than his due, the unfair man. Hence it is clear that the law-abiding man and the fair man will both be just."

Strauss: Aristotle is leading up to the thesis that there are

two different virtues both called justice. We see that most easily, Aristotle suggests, if we look at the opposite, and in the one case the man who is not just is called unjust, and in the other case he is called unfair. Now he will make more clear these differences.

Reader: "So the just there means that which is lawful and that which is fair, and the unjust means that which is illegal or unfair. Again, as the unjust man is the one who takes the larger share, he will be unjust in (inaudible) - not all good things, but those on which good and bad fortune depend. These, though always good in the (inaudible) sense, are not always good for a particular person. Yet these are the goods men pray for and pursue, although they ought not to do so. They ought while choosing the things that are good for them to pray that what is good simply may also be good for them. The unjust man, does not, however, choose the larger share. Of things that simply are smaller he chooses the smaller share. But nevertheless he is bound to take more than he is due because the lesser of two evils seems in a sense to be good, and taking more than one's due means taking more than one's due of good. (Inaudible) has called him unfair, for that is a comprehensive term and is used both for taking too much of good things and too little of bad things."

Strauss: In Greek the word is (inaudible), but that is not the answer.

Reader: "Again we see that the lawbreaker is unjust and the law-abiding man just. It is therefore clear that all lawful things are just in one sense of the word."

Strauss: In a sense. All lawful things are just in a sense. And what Aristotle develops in the sequel then is that there is a kind of virtue called justice by which is meant virtue and praising all other virtues from the point of view of our relations to other human beings. Corresponding to magnanimity insofar as it presupposes all other virtues, but differing from magnanimity because magnanimity considers, looks at this (inaudible) virtue from the point of view of the perfection of the individual by himself. The relations to others do not as such enter the notion.

Now all the legal things are in a manner just -- this must be taken very seriously. If Aristotle would omit this qualification, all legal things are just, then he would speak absurdly, would he not? It would mean that there cannot be unjust law. Should there not be the possibility at least of unjust law? That in a manner all legal or lawful things are just, that means that the most extremes in justice would not even limit itself by unjust law. Unjust law is very unjust law by the mere fact that there are laws limiting injustice.

One could see an example of that generally in academics where

some of the older kind of judges tried to apply the Nuremberg law to the Jews, and this was a boon for the Jews who (inaudible) because there was some kind of limit to the law. And what an arbitrary judge would do (inaudible).

Today (inaudible) because laws as we said may be unjust.

Student: Is that always the case? One of the problems now is that there are a lot of people in this country who think, some lawyers, rather than being heeded by the law (inaudible) . . . go outside the law . . .

Strauss: Yes, and this raises very grave questions not only on a practical level but on a theoretical level. Is there not a sphere of privacy? Is not this necessary in the notion of a just order? Now if that is so, it means that there is a sphere regarding which the law is rather powerless, and regarding which you cannot expect improvement by means of laws. And the abolition of the private sphere -- that would mean what they now call totalitarianism. (Inaudible) In other words, the temptation is as we would say that laws made for unjust purposes are nevertheless to be obeyed, but laws made for fair and just purposes may nevertheless contradict the nature of law, since they destroy the refuge of (inaudible). But if it is as Plato presents in the Republic, where there is no privacy whatever. But they claim ironically for Socrates that Socrates had no private life. He was always in public. Now of course one must ask himself could he not go home in the night. Plato shows us what happens when he was at home in bed, at the beginning of the Protagoras, when Socrates fell asleep, and it was not an issue.

Now Plato in the Republic tries to establish an order in which injustice is (inaudible). And the simple advice is this. (Inaudible) Injustice presupposes discipline. They live by virtue of the secret. Now if you abolish secrecy, you abolish life. That is the point of Plato's Republic. There is no rule which cannot be (inaudible) by any man any time of the day or the night. (Inaudible) Because this being not sufficient, you would have to make every man a policeman or a detective watching over every other man. Even this would not be sufficient because there would be such a sort which (inaudible) and would contain the seeds of disloyalty or whatever.

Student: But if you are talking about a thing in terms of (inaudible), that there is such a thing as an unjust law?

Strauss: Let us take an example. If someone would propose a law that all people whose family name begins with an A has to pay taxes, and all people with family names in B to Z do not have to pay taxes, is this not manifestly an unjust law?

Student: It would be very unjust.

Strauss: That is the principle.

Student: But the principle is that it discriminates against everybody, or it discriminates against only A.

Strauss: Maybe some kinds of discrimination are all right. (Inaudible) But there is no principle involved. If you would say those who can pay more. (Inaudible . . .), but here there is no connection with the beginning of your family name and the higher taxation. We could easily take other examples of a more practical nature.

(Inaudible) in the Politics, the life depends on the regime. In a democracy you have a different kind of life or in an oligarchy or a monarchy or whatever it might be. The law depends on the regime. Namely, a man who is a good citizen in one kind of regime is a bad citizen in another kind of a regime. A man who is a good citizen of a communist state is likely to be a bad citizen in a democracy. (Inaudible). Plato would say the law wishes to be just. (Inaudible) and therefore he has to combine a practical obedience to the law with a theoretical (inaudible) as to the claim of the law to be simply just. We will go through that next time.

Lecture XVIII
Aristotle's Ethics, April 22, 1968

Strauss: The unjust man is the man who takes away from others that which belongs to them, or which is only another aspect of the same thing, he tries to impose on others heavier burdens than he is willing to bear. Aristotle speaks first of justice in the first sense, of universal justice, and I think we should repeat a certain passage which we began to read last time, 1129b. 11.

Reader: "Since the lawbreaker is unjust, the law-abiding man is just. It is therefore clear that all lawful things are in a sense just, for what is lawful is decided by legislation."

Strauss: The legislative art.

Reader: "And each of these decisions we say is just. Now all the various pronouncements of the law aim either at the common good of all or of the best or of the rulers, so that either by virtue or in some other simpler way. So that in one way we say just things are things that produce or preserve the happiness and the part of the happiness of the political community."

Strauss: Stop here. Aristotle does not say that the legal things are just things, but he says in a sense they are the just things. Now which things? Later on he speaks in the passage which we have read of the legislative art. Things laid down not by a random legislator or legislative body, but by the legislative part could be said to be good law, and therefore these things laid down by the legislative art are just things. Now the things laid down by a legislator or legislative body are not necessarily just, because the possibility of mistake is considerable. And this is also stated as follows.

The laws wish to be, intend to be, just. But they do not always achieve that. And therefore a simple equation of the legal with the just is not reasonable. It can also be stated as follows. The laws depend on, we can say, are the function of the regime, so the laws proper in a democracy would not be proper in an oligarchy and so on.

Now all laws, according to Aristotle in his Politics, are relative, to the regime, and ought to be relative, otherwise there would be a great complication between the principle informing the regime as a whole and the law. But now some regimes are defective, and others are non-defective. Therefore the laws relative to a defective regime are by their very principle not good laws. So a simple equation of legal to the just is impossible.

One can give another reason why this simple equation of the legal with the just is not possible. Let us look later on in Book X, 1180a, 21, where Aristotle says law has a compulsory power, being a lover of discourse, stemming from some practical wisdom and reason. From some. But let us pass over it. Law is a coercive compelling force and this compelling force is here traced -- to its rational origin, but this is not the whole story.

In another passage in the Politics, in the 2nd book, 1259a, 20-21, Aristotle says the law has no force toward being obeyed apart from custom or habituation, i.e., it has no force stemming from its rationality, but only from its being customary, so this is a contradiction, which does not mean that Aristotle is in a position to resolve the contradiction, or did not in fact resolve it, (inaudible) with sufficient clarity, but it indicates the problem as rational. if the law is (inaudible . . .), then it would by right exercise a compelling force because of its rationality, but the law is not simply that and to be a law it cannot be merely rational and therefore there is an addition of something else, X, which qualifies the rationality, but makes it in this way more compelling for the mass of the citizens, and this means however again to repeat that the law is not simply rational, and the law is not simply just.

Now this is of course a somewhat embarrassing view although one can say the only view in accordance with fact because to say simply every law is worthy to be obeyed regardless cannot be maintained by any sensible man except perhaps someone who has adopted this particular position called legal positivism. That there is no higher standard for law than it has been adopted by a community, and that there is all there is to it, because as we are anti-communist, as I hope we all are, then we will say that people who are very law-abiding subjects in a communist state are in a deplorable position. And the communists will of course return this compliment to us.

And so whenever we find adherence to a principle, we find a recognition higher than the positive law, and the questions concerning these higher principles are more complicated, dark, than the questions of positive law, however, complicated, because of the question of the positive law where you can always eventually refer to an origin with a view of the legislator whose clear explicit statement finishes all controversy, and we do not have this in the sphere of the higher law.

But one could raise this question -- is this not a dangerous principle leading to all kinds of turmoil and civil disobedience and so on to question the identity of the just and the legal? And more particularly, did not Socrates not die in a way for the principles that the just is the legal by giving his argument against escaping from prison in Plato's (inaudible) where he seems

to say one has to obey the laws of the city regardless. What would you say to this argument? Some of you have read the (inaudible). Does Socrates say there that one must obey every law regardless.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But is not even this argument the contractual argument where one has made a contract with the law, with the city or the laws, and is even this unqualifiably stated there. Maybe the whole argument of the (inaudible) is based on the contractual argument of legal obligations. Mr. _____, you shake your head, so you must have another opinion.

Student: I think that it is not (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: But is the distinction made there between the positive law . . .

Student: No.

Strauss: No. But as far as the contractual argument and its limitations. the relation to the law from the citizen is compared not only to that of a man who has made a contract, a man or various men, but is also compared with the relation of children to parents, which is clearly not a contractual arrangement. But still, do we not have a broader consideration showing the limited quality of the reasoning, limited claim of the reasoning of the (inaudible)?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But one of course could say that the (inaudible) illegal rule. And therefore this is not valid. In itself. There is another point, in the *Apologia*, which is the parallel work, Socrates discusses his possibility -- the citizens of Athens as judges might make my proposal following compromise. Socrates stops now to do what he has been doing now all the time to the annoyance of his fellow citizens, and he calls that philosophizing. But he stops philosophizing for now, and then we leave him alone and permit him to die in peace.

And now what does Socrates say to this proposal which he proposes for argument sake? Now the proposal of a city would easily take the form of a law. Whoever philosophizes will be punished to death. Socrates refuses to obey such a prohibition. So although this is not stated in the (inaudible), it is stated in the following dialogue. There is one crucial qualification. Socrates reserves the right to philosophy. He has no list of rights of man. The right on which the whole issue turns in the case of (inaudible) is the right of men like Socrates to philosophize. So Socrates

does not necessarily assert that the just is identical with the legal, to say nothing of other considerations which come in and which permit one to say that the argument speaking in favor of Socrates dying in blissness is a prudential argument. Why does (inaudible . . .) have to be an old man? Because it is relevant. No one can say what Socrates would have done if he had been 30.

But he also discusses the possibility of a venerable place of refuge. And he finds there is none. Either he goes to a nearby place where he is known, and then living only as a fugitive from justice, a most undignified position certainly for a man like Socrates. Or he goes to a far away place like Thessaly, where they are very loose living people and very lawless people and it would not be nice to live there.

So the question would be, if we are practical people, may be there would be a faraway place which is not lawless, and as a matter of fact an allusion is made that such a place exists, namely the island of Crete, which had a reputation, well a dubious reputation, but only one part of the reputation is considered here. The Cretes are known as great liars, but from the other (inaudible) it was Crete being the mother-father as it were, as a very well-ordered community and Crete is far away. But the island is not pursued.

Be it as it may, the argument of the (inaudible) is a prudential argument, and only in a case like Socrates' case would it be wise to obey the law, unqualifiably. But still, one thing of course is quite true. The rule of thumb is to obey the law without ifs and buts. All rules of thumb permit exception; otherwise there would be strict rules, and the strict rule of law would in effect require that all laws are just, and this to repeat no sensible man can maintain.

There is a certain unevenness and a certain lack of mathematical elegance there. We have to add qualifications; that is quite true. But who told us that we would like this to be as elegant as a pure mathematical proof? Only people who wish that. Like Thomas Hobbes and so on.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, you can say that, but on the other hand it is not quite so simple. We must look for the principle on the ground of which one claims not to be bound by the law. Mere convenience is of course no ground whatever. Nor would they have regarded mere conscience, because it would be a question what kind of a conscience is that which opposes this or that law?

So what is the principle on the basis of which one can resist the positive law? Must it not be something higher than the

positive law? Must it not be something higher than political society? Now what is then the word, from the point of view of Socrates and Plato, that is higher than political society? Philosophy. Not poetry, because poetry is a matter which the polis is competent to regulate, you know. The tragedies and comedies were an affair of the city. Now if you say religion -- religion as such did not exist. That was called piety, but piety was regarded as an affair of the polis, and to the extent to which it transcended the polis and that meant insofar as it was based on true knowledge would it be beyond the competence of the city.

Student: Would Aristotle and Plato recognize any claims as just in the second sense, particularly justice or fairness or equality of one sort or another as a claim that could possibly be put against the city, and make what would seem to be a manifestly unjust law into a fair law?

Strauss: Yes, but in this case one could . . . for example, the case we discussed last time, that all men whose family names begin with an A pay twice as much tax as the rest, yes surely, but then there would have been a broad popular movement that would not have been isolated. Or take another case, when Socrates in the case of the trial after the Battle of (inaudible), when Socrates appealed to the law, to the positive law, that the nine generals should not be condemned and the trial be the same day. The people of Athens simply disregarded their own law out of political emotions set up by (inaudible), and it was perfectly clear that the people of Athens acted illegally, so the question of principle does not even arise.

Surely there can be unjust laws, but then the question arises can you simply disregard the law and simply disobey it because you are hurt by it, or which is a higher ground, because it is intrinsically unjust. Can you do this, you have to (inaudible) pay the price to be paid.

The question is not frequently discussed. It is discussed by Aristotle in the second book of the Politics when he speaks of Hippotamus' proposal that laws should be changed with the progress of enlightenment. The laws should also progress. Do you remember that? (Inaudible . . .).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This would never cause an issue because even in czarist Russia, if someone like Socrates had been living there and had been a (inaudible) worker, and had always shouted Heil Stalin or whatever (inaudible . . .), nothing would ever have happened to him. So the issue arises only if someone is not a (inaudible) worker and does not shout Heil Stalin.

So in other words if philosophizing means only thinking by himself and not being fooled by the propaganda in oneself, that's easy.

But if he makes use of that and speaks to others and communicates to others his observations, then and only then does it cause a political and legal issue. Surely this distinction is very important, but not in this way in which you mean.

Student: Could we just turn for a moment to the problem of the unjust law. It seems that Socrates had in a way an awfully convenient out, his being 70 and not having any place to go. You brought up the point, well, if he had been 30 instead of 70, the situation would have been much different. I just wondered where we could turn to to find some evidence of how Socrates might have acted had that been the case. Because that is the real confrontation - (inaudible) the philosophizing of which he is representative. I can't think of any kind of a similar confrontation.

Strauss: But this of course could be partly due to the fact that Socrates died for the causes of philosophy, that the Athenians regretted it soon afterwards. That is the tradition at least, that they regretted it soon afterwards and it never happened in the same way again. And Aristotle was later on forced to flee and this may be due to purely political reasons.

Student: That may speak to the Athenians, but it doesn't speak to us.

Strauss: How come that while there were quite a few persecutions of philosophers prior to Socrates in Athens, these persecutions stopped in Athens afterwards? And the school established by Plato lived on until 529, so things have changed.

There is the statement of Plutarch in his biography of (inaudible) as to what Plato had achieved, that he made philosophy acceptable to the polis. Now Socrates and Plato are not the same person, but they obviously belong together. Plato dedicated his whole written work to the memory of Socrates, to say the least, and Plato brought about a reconciliation between the polis and philosophy and bridged the gap to which extent that gap can be bridged. Now the difficulties did not completely disappear; there were persecutions of philosophers during the Roman Empire, and therefore something like Socrates' actions had to be taken from time to time again.

The principles of the solution one can say were established by Plato, but it is not an elegant solution, because the elegant solution, as Plato himself makes clear in the Republic, is that the philosophers become kings. There is something improper in Plato's (inaudible), that the philosophers being most concerned with the highest degree of wisdom should obey (inaudible . . .). The citizen body as legislators. But if you replace the democratic citizen body by the king and his courtiers, you do not fundamentally change the situation because the king and his courtiers are not necessarily wiser than a democratic citizen body. So this

difficulty will remain and there is no universally valid solution, but it reminds us of the different alignments, as it were, in different places and circumstances

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But still, let us assume for argument's sake, that the matter of practical wisdom, the *phronēsis*, has the principle of right action in itself and doesn't need either philosophy or the civil legislator. But how can you be sure that the legislator will respect the opinion of the *phronēsis*, of the man of practical wisdom. You cannot be sure of that. And then he would be accepting the same position in which the philosopher (inaudible). So that is not sufficient.

Student: A problem could arise on a lower level . . .

Strauss: Surely, there could be a decent man without any claims to philosophy and come into the same kind of conflict with the polis. One can say that is a political problem, but we need the polis as human beings, but the polis is also a great danger. But whether (inaudible) overpoweringly more strong than the danger. that we have to accept.

(Inaudible . . .) but it has something to do with that.

(Inaudible . . .) the cold monster (inaudible . . .).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Your statement is in a way a model of a statement one should not make -- one should not make. In the first place, the contract is not a symbol. When people speak of a social contract, they mean it as a fact and not as a symbol. Secondly, organic -- the state is something organic and has nothing to do with the change of regime. Who told you that? -- after the (inaudible) Edmund Burke.

Student: Yes.

Strauss: But surely not Plato or Aristotle.

Student: Well, Aristotle rejects the contention that a danger (inaudible) every time a change of regime.

Strauss: Oh, he (inaudible), every time the regime changes, a new polis emerges.

Student: He finally drops that . . .

Strauss: He does not do that. That causes great difficulty for the modern reader. If a democracy is changed into an oligarchy, or vice versa, the democrats say in such a case the city has

disappeared. Because there is no longer the citizen body, but a clique, a junta, and that is no longer the polis. And the oligarchs would say the opposite. They would probably say when the oligarchy is replaced by a democracy, that the city -- had disappeared, but they would say it had gone to pieces, like the British people with labor when the labor people came to power.

But that is meant to be literally true, not merely metaphoric and exaggerated. Now what Aristotle says is this -- when the oligarchy is replaced by a democracy, it is not true that the polis has disappeared -- there is no longer a polis, but another kind of polis, no longer a democracy but an oligarchy. The unity of the polis depends on the unity of the regime.

Student: But Aristotle denies this, (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: But it has very much to do with form and matter. The form is the regime, and the matter is human beings, including what survives revolutionary change of customs and habits and so on. That is the view which we had some difficulty to understand until the extreme and violent revolutions we witnessed in our century. Before that time it seemed to be wholly senseless assertion to assert that, and Aristotle knows of another view.

The consequence of this view that the unity of the polis consists in the unity of the regime and not of the matter. I mean they are the same people. People of today say of course who has any doubt that things like the history of the British Constitution from the days of Alfred the Great if not before that to Harold Wilson. Now Aristotle seems to say these were different Britains, the Anglo-Saxon Britains, the Norman Britains, let us say the Tudors or the Cromwell's Britain. We understand it again because we see what has happened in Russia owing to the Bolshevik Revolution, and in Germany owing to the Nazi revolution, or in Germany after the expulsion of the Nazis and the Adenauer regime, where more important these differences than what was not changed, because a regime decides, if we may now use our jargon, (inaudible) exists over which nothing is more important. And the people still use their dialect. That is ridiculously unimportant compared to what the whole community is dedicated to.

So Aristotle talks by no means nonsense, but it is nevertheless difficult because . . . and that shows itself when he speaks of the question, who is a good citizen, and his official answer given in the third book of the Politics is that what is a good citizen is relative to the regime, which today every child can understand. I mean a good Nazi is neither a good communist nor is he a good liberal democrat. So this shows clearly that a good citizen is relative to the regime. The good man would be the same regardless of all changes of the regime, and the good citizen and the good man are related then becomes a great practical question. In his constitution of Athens, Aristotle suggests another definition of the good citizen, namely a good citizen is a man who serves his country under all regimes.

There was an Athenian on rather friendly terms with Socrates, as tradition has it, (inaudible), and he was a leading statesman in a democracy, and a leading statesman under the oligarchy, and a leading statesman under the tyrants, and the Athenians called him - how do you call a man who changes his position? And Aristotle suggests in this more (inaudible) writing that this is a good citizen. In the more serious politics of course not a word about this more lighthearted issue. There can be a collaborator who doesn't do any harm but rather takes care of the interests of the country. It is in a way a more humane view, but it is in a way also more dangerous.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In a way he does this, but not completely -- after all when he does his enumeration of the parts and functions of the political (inaudible), divine worship is mentioned as a matter of course.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Not quite; after all the legislative assembly was not an assembly of priests. There were questions like that of burial and that of divine worship which were of course decided by, you can say, priestly tradition. But this would not in any case, at least in Athens, cause political trouble.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the law as it has come down originally, oral law, has been gradually qualified, and long before Plato and Aristotle's time.

Then let us reread the last point which you made -- 1129b, 17.

Reader: "So that in one sense we say just things are things that produce and preserve happiness and parts of happiness of the political community."

Strauss: That is a very important remark with a view to the question which we could not help raising all the time because we have not found hitherto a satisfactory answer, and that is the end which the virtues serve. And here we have an answer. The end which the moral virtues serve is the happiness of the political community. Let us say public happiness. That would seem to be a good answer. I mean the answer is still immediately intelligible, and having been raised to the status of (inaudible) by utilitarianism, although there are special interpretations. We have to see whether this is Aristotle's final view, whether we can make public happiness the end which morality is supposed to serve. Now let us go on.

Reader: "And the law prescribes six conducts, the conduct of a brave man, for example, not to desert one's post, not to run away, not to throw down one's arms, that of a moderate man, for example, not to commit adultery, that of a gentle man, for example, not to

strike, not to speak evil, and so with actions exemplifying the rest of the virtues and vices, commanding these and forbidding those, rightly if the law has been rightly enacted, and not rightly if it has been made at random."

Strauss: So Aristotle says here that the law commands the work of all virtues, and therefore the justice which consists in obeying the law is the universal virtue, because all virtues are in a way commanded by the law. That is the main point. But he makes here a qualification which was implied in what he said before. The law commands all actions of all the virtues, but it does this properly only if it is properly laid down, and it does this badly if it is made (inaudible), i.e., by apprentices or other inept people, which is of course possible. It could very well be done by inept apprentices, and for this reason the just cannot be identical with the legal.

Reader: "Justice then in this sense is perfect virtue."

Strauss: There tends to be perfect virtue, because justice, i.e. obedience to the law, the law in every respect, and the law commands all actions in all virtues, and therefore obedience to the law, that is to say justice, is identical with being (inaudible).

But then Aristotle makes a qualification.

Reader: "Though not simply, but with regard to others."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Here is a critical point. Universal justice is identical with perfect virtue, with complete virtue, only from a certain point of view, namely the point of view of other men. Or more generally stated, the polis, because the polis too includes me too but I also am always someone who can doubt whether the polis is right, who can oppose it. This means that virtue by itself does not have this reference to the polis. And that is a very strange implication. (Inaudible) try to explain what this can mean.

Virtue is concerned with the perfection of the individual as individual. Hence virtue as virtue has no necessary reference to the city or the fatherland. We have seen this especially in the discussion of courage. Although courage proper has its place in war, as Aristotle emphasizes, an activity that is that necessarily belongs to the city, but no reference to the city or to the fatherland occurs in Aristotle's discussion of courage. We must try to understand this. We must read a bit further on before we can understand this.

Reader: "This is why justice is often thought to be the chief of the virtues and more marvelous than an evening or a morning star, and we have the proverb that justice is all virtue found in some. And justice is perfect virtue because it is the practice of perfect virtue."

Strauss: The more literal thing would be the use of perfect virtue.

Reader: "Perfect in a special degree because it possesses and practices virtue towards others and not merely by itself, for there are many who can practice virtue in their own private affairs and do not do so in their relations with others."

Strauss: Again I think we stop here for a moment. Here he speaks of justice in this universal sense in terms of unusually high praise. This justice is the most embracing of all the virtues. The praise reminds us of the praise of magnanimity, which we have seen in Book IV. Aristotle seems to agree that this kind of justice, universal justice, is superior to magnanimity. This would mean that public happiness is the end of all virtues. This is something which was in no way suggested in the analysis of magnanimity, or so it seems. Aristotle could easily have linked up magnanimity with public happiness. I used at that time the example of Montgomery, a magnanimous man well-known in our age and therefore a useful example. Civil society needs men who are born to command and who know that they are born to command. Therefore, the link with public happiness is obvious. Aristotle does not even try to do that.

Why does he not do that? This throws some light on the question of the end, the end which the virtues serve. What is public happiness? If public happiness means more or less what Bentham and other utilitarians meant by it, namely proper care for food, housing, clothes and what have you, that is one view. But this would not be the Aristotelian view. Aristotle would say well, that belongs to the sphere of mere living. But the status of the polis is to live well, not merely to live. That is to say, the polis owes its dignity not to the satisfaction of elementary needs, but to the moral tone, the moral level, of the society. The moral tone of the society -- that could mean of all of its members or at any rate its preponderant part, so the preponderant part would give the character of the polis even if today people speak of opinion leaders -- you must have heard that expression -- and they are only a part of the populace, but they lead opinion, and that (inaudible).

Now if this is so, if the polis cannot be understood in the light of mere living, but only in the light of living well, then virtue cannot be understood in terms of public happiness, since public happiness itself must be understood in terms of virtue. And therefore the implication (inaudible . . .).

And so it remains that we have in the Ethics two peaks, magnanimity on the one hand, and justice on the other hand, even if we grant, which we may, that the word justice is a somewhat higher peak, than magnanimity, yet magnanimity has a dignity of its own, which cannot be absolved completely by the dignity of universal justice.

Now let us continue here. We must come to a conclusion.

Reader: "This is why we approve the saying of Bias, 'rule will

show a man', for in ruling one is brought into relations with others and becomes a member of a community."

Strauss: Does this saying of Bias and what Aristotle remarks on it remind you of a present-day modern issue? That rule, office, magistracy, will show a man? That is the same. I was reminded of the saying of the difference between a statesman and a politician . . . you know that saying. I wasn't thinking of that, but of Lord (inaudible) famous saying that power corrupts. Aristotle suggests the opposite, not that he didn't know that power corrupted sometimes. Power does not necessarily corrupt; power is an opportunity to show off a man's capacity, without which he wouldn't have no ability without power.

Now let us go on.

Reader: "For the same reason, namely that it involves relationship with someone else accounts for the view that justice alone of the virtues is for the good of others, because it does what is for the advantage of another, either a ruler or an associate."

Strauss: Justice is the foreign good, the good of somebody else. So in a way Aristotle show that (inaudible) was right, and that has great implications.

Reader: "And then the worst man is he who practices vice towards his friends as well as in regard to himself, so the best is not he who practices virtue in regard to himself, but he who practices it toward others, and that is the difficult task. Justice in this sense then is not a part of virtue but the whole of virtue. And its opposite injustice is not a part of vice, but the whole vice. The distinction between virtue and justice in this sense seems clear from what has been said."

Strauss: In this sense belongs to justice -- or better translated -- virtue in this kind of justice appears as manifest from what has been said.

Reader: "They are the same, but their mode of being is different. What as displayed in relation to others as justice as being simply a habit of a certain kind is virtue."

Strauss: So here Aristotle makes then clear why he differs from Thrasymachus. This virtue toward others is more difficult than the virtue which has to do entirely with oneself, and where one is interested in merely becoming virtuous, and therefore this kind of justice is not inferior, but superior to virtue which does not have this reference to others.

I come back to a question which I have prepared by a previous remark. The two peaks of Aristotle's Ethics are universal justice as discussed here, and magnanimity. Is this only an interesting document showing us the moral case of Aristotle, the trait of his character as it were, his private value system, or is it

a problem which every philosopher worth his salt must face?

Now to simplify the matter, let us limit ourselves to a comparison with Plato. Is there a parallel in Plato to this distinction between magnanimity and justice? Well, not in these terms, in the terms of justice and magnanimity. But in the following manner. Especially in the Republic, were as you know the subject is justice. But what does Plato in the Republic understand by justice? Surely not the same as what Aristotle understands here. Universal justice, i.e., obeying a law which prescribes the actions of all virtues.

Now in the Republic, you may recall, they find out first what the three other virtues are: courage, wisdom, and moderation. And they have some difficulties in finding out what justice is. But finally Socrates guides them to the answer, and what is the answer given? Finding his own business. This is a very loose definition which is implied in the passage. Something of this kind we would say is justice. If it means doing one's work well, that is justice. Doing one's work is not necessarily doing one's work well.

More specifically, justice according to the Republic regulates the duties of the parts of the polis towards one another. So the parts of the farmer, craftsman, to the soldier and so on.

But what about the relation of the city toward other cities? After all, cannot there be injustice in foreign affairs, and should Plato have been such a babe in the woods that he did not know that? A single reading of a page in Thucydides would have showed the problem. Now what does the Republic teach about justice of the city toward other cities?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, but what about the limitations on warfare. What are the limitations of the Greek cities?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And no looting and so on. But do you remember the precise context, in the case of the barbarians? (Inaudible . . .).

But with all this said, there is something about the relation of the polis to other cities. But what about the justice of the individual or the soul of the individual? This consists also in ordering the parts of the soul properly. This definition does not include any reference to the relation of other individuals. This means to say, even according to the Republic, justice is rather the perfection of the individual than social virtues. This is a very long question. However this may be, the Republic by its whole structure (inaudible) to make a distinction analogous to the distinction we are forced to make on the basis of Aristotle's Ethics, between the perfection of the individual as the one consideration and the perfection of the social virtues on the other, although

there are all kinds of links between the two things -- the points of view are different and very importantly different, and the reason they are different is this. If it is true that by virtue of the highest interest man transcends the city, then man cannot be understood fully in terms of the city and therefore in terms of social virtues, and that is of course what Aristotle and Plato believe. That is, the highest in man transcends a city and is therefore no longer a social virtue properly understood, and to this extent many say there is a Platonic analogy to the duality of the two peaks in Aristotle's Ethics. Are there any questions you would like to raise in this regard?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, in a way because he does not have this reference to the others and to the city. But this of course (inaudible) because being concerned with honors -- it means in the first place honors given by the city, (inaudible . . .), you could find in resurrecting some interpreters of the chapter on magnanimity who say here Aristotle describes here the philosopher. But this as a sweeping thesis can easily be refuted. The magnanimous man is inbetween say Pericles and Socrates, and one could not say the same thing about the just man as you find at the beginning of Book V.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: It is one way of putting it, but it is not the way which they have said there, because they start from the distinction between these four virtues -- that is the starting point -- and therefore they must find justice, and you know they have great trouble -- they think it is lying somewhere in the ground, and that is the reason why they couldn't find it. But in time they will give a dubious definition of justice which isn't a definition because it leaves undetermined the particular kinds of (inaudible) which is justice.

We will continue and turn to the next chapter.

Reader: " . . . the latter as proved by the following considerations. When a man displays the other vices, for instance, throws away his (inaudible) from cowardice, or uses abusive language, from bad temper, or refuses to assist a friend with money, though he acts unjustly, he is not taking more than his share of things. When a man takes more than his share, it is frequently not due to any of these vices and certainly not to all of them, yet nevertheless the action does display some vice; it displays in fact the vice of injustice. Therefore there is another sort of injustice which is a part of injustice in the universal sense and there is something unjust which is a part of the unjust in general."

Strauss: Let us stop here. Imparted in that notion, when he says 'he acts according to some badness, and we blame him' -- well the mere fact that we blame him proves that it is something bad.

What does it mean? Do we not frequently blame actions of human beings without justification? Of course. But if we blame a sensible man, this blaming is really the actual blaming, I mean if we speak of a human being, especially human beings with whom we have no conflict of interest and where we are reasonably fair and blame and praise. We can use our blame and praise in those cases as an index (inaudible . . .). (Inaudible . . .). Now in all these cases we have unjust acts and yet we have a reference to a particular virtue, but the vice to which he refers in this case is cowardice. Or adultery -- he disobeyed the law, an unjust act. But he refers to a particular virtue, namely lack of self-control, as the cause of these particularly vicious actions. But there are unjust acts which are traced not to cowardice or lack of self-control or any other vice, but to injustice. Hence injustice is not only universal injustice, breach of law, but is also particular injustice. We will come back to this. Aristotle gives two more reasons in order to prove the same point.

Reader: "Again suppose two men commit adultery, one for profit, and the other from desire and having to pay, then the latter would be easily a profligate rather than a man taking more than his due, while the former would be deemed unjust but not a profligate. Clearly therefore it is doing it for profit that makes the act unjust."

Strauss: If someone commits an unjust act not from lack of self-control but from love of gain, then he is an unjust man in the second sense of injustice. Unjust are all these things but they are not unjust for desire of illicit gain and only the latter have the (inaudible) of particular injustice.

So if someone commits an unjust act from cowardice, he is not an unjust man in the narrower sense of the term, but if he takes bribes, then he is an unjust man in the narrow sense of the term. Let us take the next argument to complete this.

Reader: "Again, whereas all other unjust acts are invariably assigned to some particular vice, for example, adultery is put down to profligacy, desertion in the ranks to cowardice, assault to anger; an unjust act by which a man has profitted is not attributed to any vice other than injustice."

Strauss: If we speak of a man committing an unjust act without any qualifications, we mean frequently particular injustice (inaudible . . .). A man who gets rich by stinginess is not unjust. (Inaudible . . .).

Reader: "It is, therefore, apparent that there exists, apart from the injustice that comprises the whole of vice, another partial kind of injustice which shares the name and nature of the first in that its definition falls within the same genus. The capacity of both is revealed in our relations with others, but while the sphere

of the former is everything that is the concern of a morally good man, the latter deals with honor, material goods, security, or whatever single term we can find to express all these collectively, and its motive is the pleasure that comes from profit."

Strauss: So Aristotle explains here then why the two kinds of justice are akin -- in other words, it is not a (inaudible) but a (inaudible) kinship that this universal thing is called injustice and one particular thing is also called injustice. In the case of courage and the other virtues, there is not necessarily the relation to others. In the case of mine and thine, there is necessarily the relation to others.

Now let me speak of all virtues as a whole, as something due to the (inaudible) or the city, then we speak in this case not merely of virtue, the complete virtue, but of justice, the complete justice. Justice is the social virtue, but there are two kinds of social virtues. First, all virtues as respect duties to others, and second, one particular virtue, (inaudible . . .).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: No, that is a narrow understanding, a modern understanding of morality, that morality has only to do with relations to others. Hobbes lays the foundation for that probably more than anybody else by saying that the virtues are the conditions of peace, i.e. of peaceably living together. (Inaudible . . .); there is something in man which transcends society, which transcends the polis, and which shows itself already on the moral level, and (inaudible) limitations on morality.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible), and there are various character traits which are distinguishable. Aristotle will say later on that if a man is truly courageous, truly virtuous, then he must have all the virtues. But according to the common view, man can be courageous without being moderate or wise while he is still intelligible. (Inaudible), while he is a great crook. That was at all times possible to say, and only the more sophisticated people like Socrates deny that a crook is truly courageous, although he is willing to expose his hide and to shoot it out. But this would not yet make him a truly courageous man.

All virtues which have to do with the character are moral virtues. The other virtues are called intellectual virtues, and there is no distinction explicitly made within the moral virtues.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: It is frequently said that magnanimity is a (inaudible) of all the other virtues.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Then he is a rather unfortunate man, that he has to do quite a few things which are below him in order not to (inaudible) completely, but it wouldn't do away with (inaudible) virtue.

Aristotle will now develop in the sequel about particular justice, and the general thesis which he will try to develop is that particular justice is related to universal justice as a part to the whole, the whole being universal justice, universal virtue in its relations to other human beings. (Inaudible . . .).

Lecture XIX
Aristotle's Ethics, April 24, 1968

Strauss: That is the question -- whether he could act justly. Think of the case of Socrates -- when Socrates was commanded by the Thirty with three other Athenians to arrest a perfectly innocent man. Well, the three others, feeling the power of the regime, arrested (inaudible). Socrates did not go there, but he couldn't prevent it. But Xenophon, who reports this, said that if the regime had lasted much longer, they would not have permitted Socrates to continue with this (inaudible) practice.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But still, there is a certain ambiguity about the word 'may'. If you may do something with the moral certainty that you will be killed for it, you may also not do it.

Another paper -- a few points. How can he say that a man who died in battle for a bad cause is a truly courageous man? How can he possibly say that dying for a bad cause is a noble action? I think that is what Aristotle means. Whether the end of his fighting is truly good or not, meaning whether the cause of the fighting is a good or bad one, depends on a way on his ruler. But this is in a way what Aristotle says because the decision about the war is not made by the soldier, but what in modern language would be the sovereign. The legislators in a democracy, oligarchy or monarchy.

Therefore, Aristotle says somewhere in the Politics that *phronēsis*, practical wisdom, on this high political level, is a matter of the absolute ruler. Those who do not actually rule can only have right opinions. But in the case we have now, Richard Nixon, said he can not rightly judge of the wisdom of the action because he doesn't have access available to people only like President Johnson.

Now our Greek friend whose complicated name I have forgotten -- you had a question.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: If you start from the teleology, Aristotle was compelled or enabled by this doctrine to assert every natural motion is teleological, and therefore the fall of a heavy body tends toward the place of a heavy body, i.e., the earth. In Aristotle everything is teleological. Now this became incredible for a variety of reasons, and today no one entertains the notion that there could be a teleological physics or chemistry. The living body (inaudible) not too easy, and in the case of man it is very hard to abstract events. But the argument as it can be traced within the confines of political philosophy, then we have to go back to Machiavelli.

The issue of teleology and non-teleology is not explicitly discussed. It comes out in this form. If we accept the Aristotelian or maybe Platonic view, then if we regard as the starting point of all political and moral considerations, the end of man, the full duties of man, then we make very high demands on man, individually and collectively. Therefore, our politics becomes "unrealistic." Therefore, Hobbes says that we must begin in a different way, not with man's complete duties but rather with man's fundamental right, with that right which cannot be possibly denied without destroying civil society, any civil society, and that is according to Hobbes the right of self-preservation.

This has this advantage, according to this school -- if you have a doctrine in agreement with the fundamental natural rights which every child understands, then the chances of the actualization of a civil order are very great. If you make very high demands, the chance of actualization is more. This is an intra-political argument for Hobbes and his fight against Aristotle.

But your question went a bit farther than that -- by the way, there is one point which you cannot forget, that in classical antiquity, people who were in no way teleologically oriented -- I mean the people loosely called the sophists -- say men like Protagoras and so on, do we find any doctrine of the rights of man, the rights of man being prior to the duties of man, as we have it in Hobbes explicitly. No, because in classical antiquity the line was very simply drawn -- either you accept that there is something by nature right, then this by nature right does not have the character of rights in contradistinction to duties. When you say all right is convention. This was a very common view among the intellectuals of classical antiquity. But what you find in modern times, in this epoch, especially 17th and 18th centuries, and up to the present day, is opposition to conventions, that there is a natural right, but the natural right does not have the character of duties but rather of rights. Therefore of something where men can be dependent upon to be interested in. Men are not so interested -- that is the notion of fulfilling their duties, but they are greatly interested in their rights, and therefore if you appeal to the rights, they seem to be much more realistic than the other way around.

I think when you look today at the political scene, and when you hear too many people using moral language, you see that the appeal is to a considerable extent to the right of the people concerned rather than toward doing their duties. In practice it is a bit more complicated, as you are aware of.

Now the section which we are discussing now in the Ethics and which we read last time deals with the distinction between particular and universal justice. This was apparently for the Greeks somewhat difficult to see that justice means on the one hand universal justice, and on the other hand particular justice. I.e., that there was only a single word available for two very different things.

And Aristotle had to go out of his way to make clear that the single word means two radically different, although kindred, phenomena. Now in English or in the modern languages we do not have this difficulty. Is this then a purely Greek idiosyncrasy? Toward this complication regarding justice or are we not faced with the same kind of problem although maybe we believe it has been solved.

Student: It would seem that our solution has been to try to replace universal justice by particular justice.

Strauss: By reducing universal justice to particular justice. What becomes of the rest of universal justice?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: What has happened? What has become in modern times the distinction between particular and universal justice? Well, universal justice, as Aristotle says, is virtue as a whole, completely. If from a peculiar point of view, from the point of view of the other man. So universal justice in other words is more or less interpreted as the same as morality, and particular justice seems rather to be the sphere of what?

Student: Leaders.

Strauss: But leading is the basis of what?

Student: Positive law.

Strauss: We are now a bit closer. I think the distinction with which Aristotle is concerned is survival, and I think in a hardly recognizable manner. And the distinction which we are (inaudible) between law and morality. We believe somewhere that there is a sphere, even if all law is public law, we have the notion that not all subjects are fit to be regulated by law, and these other subjects are given over to another problem called morality. There is nothing moral which is not a fit subject for discussion. And this we can say with minor modifications, that the legislator does not forbid and punish because it would be too complicated to bring it home, or because too many people would transgress that law and it would not be feasible.

Thomas' example -- between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman -- and this is morally wrong, according to the Thomastic doctrine, but the legislature does not have the ability because it happens so often and so on and so on.

In practice, not all morally wrong things will be forbidden. (Inaudible . . .). In this respect of course Hobbes is of very great importance with his doctrine that the natural law is exclusively or at least primarily concerned with the order -- with the establishment and preservation of peace. That men do not harm or

provoke one another towards violence, and everything else becomes morally blamed, but is not a fit subject for legislation.

We have it in our days in the well-known question of sexual freedom. Rape of course would be exempt, but sexual acts committed with the agreement of both parties, (inaudible . . .). (Inaudible . . .), and even the people who would agree, the liberals or whatever they are called, who would agree with this view about society and sexual (inaudible) are very much concerned with making morality legally enforced in other areas. The war in Vietnam, as an immoral law, (inaudible) racial discrimination -- here morality has to take care that the morally correct has to be established by law, and here although the content is different, the principle is the same. Whatever is moral is in principle fit to be made the subject of legislation. The problem is somehow concealed in the Aristotelian discussion which we have read.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But everything morally relevant can be legally enforced. (Inaudible) and then we have the distinction between the moral and legal, and would that be in the private or the public? That is surely not Aristotle. After all, there are many private things subject to legislation, (inaudible). Or can you support your assertion by some example?

Student: You said it is a distinction between the legal and the moral is not simply (inaudible) in the distinction between the public and the private.

Strauss: That I did not say.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I see. Purely private things. This is what Aristotle (inaudible), too, What is going on between two different people of the same or different sex, is not universally left to the (inaudible) according to present or common law. There is still an age unit presupposed. In other words, I would like you to make it clearer.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: (Inaudible.)

Student: You said everything moral can be legislated.

Strauss: In principle.

Student: But that would only be true if all religious matters were of the same nature as you mentioned last time, (inaudible),

namely that religious matters were in some way subservient or regulated by the polis. Now in religion in a form like Christianity (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .). Not that every Christian can simply disobey the law except in clear cases like idolatry, but it led to the fact that there were other legal bodies superimposed on the city law, either the divine law or the common law. It does not necessarily mean that we have to make a distinction between morality and law in the present-day sense, and a clear proof is the fact that Thomas Aquinas (inaudible) distinction.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The distinction between public and private law comes to us directly from (inaudible . . .). What is by nature private (inaudible) the body. This can empirically be proved by example. You may love another man or woman as much as you like. It's your toothache. It's your toothache, and his or her toothache is his or hers; you cannot feel the toothache; you can be sympathetic. (Inaudible . . .).

Let me very crudely but not misleadingly state. The sphere of the political and the sphere of the moral are de iura the same. But still, Aristotle says in the Politics that a man who is not political, doesn't belong to civil society, is unable to participate in civil society, is either a brute or a (inaudible). So this means that the whole moral and political sphere is not the (inaudible).

(Inaudible.) Surely Aristotle doesn't believe that philosophers can or should become kings, but the most private things is from another point of view the most public thing. Because every polis, every city, is a very large house, so to speak, within which people live, and from that point of view the polis is private.

Your main theme, I think, is correct -- that justice in both its forms is visibly connected to the ends that it serves than the other virtues, according to Aristotle. And this can be proven.

Let us read 1130b, 6.

Reader: "Thus it is clear that there are more kinds of justice than one, and that the term has another meaning besides virtue as a whole. We have then to ascertain the nature and attributes of justice in this special sense. Now we have distinguished two meanings of the unjust, unlawful, and the unfair. And two meanings of the just, namely the lawful and the fair. Injustice then in the sense previously mentioned corresponds to the meaning unlawful, but since the unfair is not the same as the unlawful, but different from it, and related to it as a part to the whole, not everything unlawful is unfair, though everything unfair is unlawful. So also the unjust and injustice in the particular sense are not the same as the unjust and injustice in the universal sense, but different

from them, and related to them as part to whole. For injustice in this sense is a part of universal injustice, and the part that we are now considering of the part of universal injustice. We have therefore to discuss justice and injustice and just and unjust in a particular sense."

"So let us set aside that justice which is coextensive with virtue in general, being in fact that the virtue in general is toward someone else and the other which is a fact of vice toward someone else. It is also clear how we should decide what is just and unjust in the corresponding senses. For the actions that spring from virtue in general are in the main identical with the actions according to law, since the law enjoins conduct displaying the various particular virtues and forbids conduct displaying the various particular vices. Also, the laws laid down for the education of such a man for life are the rules productive of virtue in general."

Strauss: Wait a second here. Now the main thing is that particular justice is related to universal justice as a part to the whole. It goes without saying that what is true of particular justice is true also of the other virtues like courage, temperance and so on. They are related to universal justice as parts to the whole. (Inaudible . . .). But there is one point toward the end of which you read about the most of the legal things are the same as those ordered, prescribed, by the whole of virtue. Why does he make this qualification?

Reader: "For the actions that spring from virtue in general are in the main identical with the actions according to law."

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .). Now read the last sentence.

Reader: "For the actions that spring from virtue in general are identical with the actions according to law, since the law enjoins conduct displaying the various particular virtues and forbids conduct displaying the various particular vices. Also, the laws laid down for the education of such a man for life are the rules productive of virtue in general." "Of the education of the individual as such that makes a man simply a good man, the question whether this is the business of political science or some other science must be determined later. For being a good man is not in every way the same as being a good citizen."

Strauss: So all virtue which has to do with the other, and therefore the common, the public, belongs to the sphere of universal justice, but this is of course subject of legislation. But can legislation, however, good, take care of the whole of (inaudible)? That is the question.

And here Aristotle intimates a principle which he does not make clear at all. We can state it as follows. On the one hand it is the duty of the legislator to make men good citizens and doers of noble deeds, but on the other hand, it is the education of the indi-

vidual through which a man becomes a simply good man, so that the most important kind of education may be regulated by the state, but it cannot be achieved by the state. But here Aristotle leaves this open, as he says, is the highest form of education by which the individual is taken out of the earth, to use a platonic expression, brought up as an individual, is this also truly a subject of politics, of political art in the highest and most comprehensive sense? Aristotle does not settle this here, and only says that it is not the same thing to be a good man and to be a citizen in general. The good man is not simply identical with the good citizen.

Some of you have read in the Politics in which Aristotle discusses this at great length. Can you remind us of what we learned on that occasion?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: A good citizen in a democracy is for this very reason a bad citizen in an oligarchy. And so on and so on. And the good man has no relativity to the regime. And to the contrary, the regimes, and their goodness and badness, are determined with a view to the qualities of the good man.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Where does he speak of the citizen's courage in the section on courage?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Exactly, and we get now a reason for that, because the citizen is relative to the regime. In other words, while we will always start in such discussions from the generally accepted opinions which we all in a way understand at once, we cannot leave it at that. We must transcend them. And that is what Aristotle does all the time.

If this is so, if the good man is not identical with the good citizen as such, what follows from that? That the good man has no relation to the political order, to the regime, at all -- is this the Aristotelian conclusion? A private gentleman sitting on his farm and minding his own business, is this what Aristotle means? Surely not immediately, but what he merely means in the context of the Politics is this: that the good man is a good citizen in a particular regime, number one, and secondly he must belong to the ruling body in the best regime. If he is not actively engaged in political activity, ruling, many of his qualities will lie dormant, and that will detract from his goodness. The good man is the good citizen in the best regime as long as he pursues a ruling function. But this is only intimated here and not developed. It is however an indication of the fact that the simple equation of morality and politics is not feasible.

Because of the complication which arises on the political level. It is very easy to speak of the laws being in perfect harmony with morality, and Aristotle has here done it a few times, and especially Socrates does this in the (inaudible) as you will remember the eulogy of the laws. Socrates is absolutely silent about the democratic laws of Athens, election by lot, of which he surely disapproves, and nevertheless he says must obey the laws. One reason given -- if you disapprove of laws regarding marriages by virtue of which your father took your mother for a wife, (inaudible), Socrates says no, but the laws wisely do not ask him to approve of all Athenian law. Socrates would have to make a qualification; that is one of the intricacies of this (inaudible).

Student: In 1130b, 21, (inaudible), now is there a law by the legislature which is purely technical, (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: In other words, things not subject to human deliberation are not subject to legislation. The decision between right and left cannot be legislated in or out, but driving right and driving left can be legislated. (Inaudible . . .). But Aristotle must have had a reason for making this remark that not all laws are legislated from the point of view of virtue.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: You mean a man can have an intellectual virtue on the highest level without moral virtue? Complicated question. People sometimes say that Aristotle says so, but there is no passage in which he says so. But one must assume that Aristotle had a little bit of common sense.

(Inaudible) . . . one can only philosophize in a state of luxury.

Now we may go through the whole list of virtues, and find, most times, at least, that the moral virtues are indispensable conditions of intellectual virtues. A man of theoretical wisdom would be aware of his worth, and it would somehow show in his bearing. Aristophanes describes how Aristotle goes through the streets of Athens and (inaudible), but one thing is clear, the man had a great consciousness of his worth, which is something akin to magnanimity.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: If you put it this way, in the ordinary sense, it is not. My attention was first drawn to this difficulty in a statement of Thomas Aquinas in his Theological Summa. I was also brought up as everybody else with a view that moral virtues are simply and unqualifiably the conditions of the intellectual perfection. And then I read in Thomas that the theoretical virtues, do not presuppose moral virtues, with the exception of practical wisdom, prudence, and this is clearly what Aristotle (inaudible) in the Ethics, that you cannot become a man of prudence, a man of practical

wisdom, prudence, without becoming at the same time a morally good man. In other words, you are only clever, as Alcibiades says, he was only clever but he was not (inaudible) because a sensible man would not do this thing which he did.

But coming back to Thomas, as for theoretical wisdom, prudence, it does not presuppose moral virtue (inaudible), to show that this is what Aristotle means. The principle is this: what we call morality, what Aristotle calls the fine or noble or the just, has two ends which it serves, and the one end is the society or the polis, (inaudible . . .), which purpose of society is served by that, and in the case of magnanimity, I gave you the answer. You need generals who have a great confidence in their judgment, and rightly so, and the same would also be true by non-generals, if they don't have great confidence in their judgment, if they pretend to run for office only because they have been drafted, this belongs to the necessary and sometimes charming hypocrisy that still if they don't have self-confidence, they would be of no great use. In other words, we can find the social functions of the various virtues without great difficulty.

But this is only one end. The virtues are also required for another end. The other end, and that end is theoretical wisdom. Now what the two ends require, society on the one end, and theoretical perfection on the other, are not identical but agrees to a considerable extent. So that the two ends of man demand morality, but not in the same way and in the same respect. And in this sense one must understand Thomas' assertion that intellectual virtues do not require morality, morality in the ordinarily understood sense. To say the man who is very dedicated to the theoretical life will lead a rather aesthetic life, one can say. But not on moral grounds, but as Nietzsche once put it in his somewhat cynical language, that a jockey, who in order to win a race, abstains from alcohol and so on for a certain period of time, because he thinks not that it is praiseworthy in itself, but practically indispensable if he wants to achieve the result he is aiming at. This point of Nietzsche you find in his essay, what is the significance of aesthetic ideas?, the third part of the genealogy of morals, which gives a brief sketch of the theoretical ideal of the philosopher, and in my opinion it is unsurpassed in modern times. All the more so because Nietzsche did not identify with the ancients, but he understood the main points very well.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Again, to quote Aristotle, nothing like having another look at it, and in this case, the text. What does Aristotle say on the subject? Now opposing a regime means in the sharpest and clearest case trying to depose it. What does Aristotle say about that? In the Politics he speaks about that occasionally.

He says, the man who has the best reason for rebelling against a regime, a bad regime, are not rich, nor the many, but the good men. And they are the least to think of rebellion. In other words, they would be entitled to do it, but they would not begin to do it. Because they would have to enter all kinds of alliances with (inaudible), and politics makes strange bedfellows. And these Allies might give the revolution its color. So that the new regime might be superior to the other regime in some respects, but in other respects it might be inferior. Or as it is put in the Republic, (inaudible . . .), if there is a severe rain and you do not have an umbrella, you stand under the doorway to protect yourself from the rain. This doesn't appeal to many of us, and I don't say without qualification that it is a sound view because given the changeability of human things, (inaudible . . .).

So let us now turn to 1130b, 30.

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Reader: ". . . adultery, poisoning, procuring, enticement of slaves, assassination, false witness; others are violent, for instance, assault, imprisonment, robbery with violence, maiming, abusive language, character-smearing."

Strauss: Yes, now this Aristotle will develop at some length in the sequel. Private justice, that which we ordinarily mean we speak of justice, is of two parts which tend to be called distributive and commutative justice. Distributive justice is in the clearest case the distribution of honors and other external goods by the community (political) and here the consideration would be of course the worthiness of it. And contrary to this, one could say the (inaudible) dispensable is to everyone according to need. The Aristotelian view is to everyone according to merit. And therefore this is the principle of distributive justice. Marx is saying to all different things to people of different merit.

And regarding the tradition of commutative justice, in which there is no such relativity to the Levellers, will be made clear. For example. if A buys shoes from B, and there is something like the just pride involved, and that is wholly independent of whether A is a gentleman or not a gentleman or vice versa, (inaudible). The voluntary exchange (inaudible). Then there are also violent ones and that is the subject of penal law generally speaking. Now that is very strange, that Aristotle would bring together the ordinary peaceful transactions among people together with penal law. (Inaudible) an act of murder and what the judge does to the murderer with what the judge does in settling a question of a bill for making shoes, with finding out what has to be done to the party (inaudible . . .).

At any rate, Aristotle regards these two fields, commercial transactions and criminal actions, actions of private citizens against other private citizens, as belonging to the same kind of justice.

If you would take the time to read the examples, you would see that Aristotle gives in each case seven examples. Some of you who have read Plato with care might have come across some enumerations of 7's or multiples of 7's more than once, but whether Aristotle goes in for this kind of (inaudible) is a long question.

Now shall we go on?

Reader: "Now since an unjust man is one who is unfair and the unjust is the unequal, . . ."

Strauss: (Inaudible) the same.

Reader: ". . . it is obvious that there exists also a median term between the two extremes of inequality. This is the fair or equal. For any action that admits of a more and a less also admits of an equal. Now if the unjust is unequal, the just must be equal; and that is, in fact, what everyone believes without argument. Since the equal is a median, the just, too, will be a median."

Strauss: Now if equal is a median, there is more or less a gain or a loss. But together there must be a mean between them. Now the mean is the universal mean toward which all virtues (inaudible). But in the case of justice, the mean has a peculiar character. You must find a proper mean between the two parties, between the damage incurred by A and the gain by B.

Reader: "Now the equal involves at least two terms. Accordingly, the just is necessarily both median and equal, and it is a relative, and (it is just) for certain individuals. Inasmuch as it is median, it must be median between some extremes, i.e., between the more and the less; inasmuch as it is equal, it involves two shares that are equal; and inasmuch as it is just, it must be just for certain parties. Consequently, the just involves at least four terms; there are two persons in whose eyes it is just, and the shares which are just are two."

"Also, there will be the same quality between the persons and the shares; the ration between the shares will be the same as that between the persons. If the persons are not equal, their (just) shares will not be equal; but this is the source of quarrels and recriminations, when equals have and are awarded unequal shares or unequals equal shares. The truth of this is further illustrated by the principle "To each according to his deserts." Everyone agrees that in distributions the just share must be given on the basis of what one deserves, though not everyone would name the same criterion of deserving: democrats say it is free birth, oligarchs that it is wealth or noble birth, and aristocrats that it is excellence."

"Consequently, the just is something proportionate, for proportion is not only applicable to abstract number, but also to number in a generalized sense. Proportion is equality of ratios and involves at least four terms. That a "discrete proportion" involves four

terms is obvious; but the same is also true of a "continuous proportion," for it uses one term as though it were two and mentions it twice, e.g., line x: line y= line y: line z. Here line y is mentioned twice, so that there will be four proportionate terms if line y is taken twice. The just, too, involves at least four terms and the ratio (between the terms of one pair) is equal (to that between the terms of the other), for the persons and things are similarly distributed. Therefore, $A:B=c:d$ and, by alternation, $A:c=B:d$. It also follows that one whole, (i.e., person plus share,) will stand in the same ratio to the other (whole, as person stands to person). This is the union of terms that distribution (of honors, wealth, etc.) brings about, and if it is effected in this manner, the union is just. Consequently, the combination of term (person) A with term (share)c and of term (person) B with term (share) d in the distribution is just."

Strauss: Let us stop here, and let us first remind ourselves of the few very elementary mathematical things which Aristotle uses here. In the first case he says the just is proportional, and proportion is not peculiar only to the mathematic number, more literally, but to every number. Now what does a (inaudible) number mean?

Student: Representing a line.

Strauss: No, that is not simple enough. Now a number means -- it is very hard to translate this into English, and it is easier to translate this into German, (inaudible . . .). Now a number, to put it very briefly, is just anything numbered, 12, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, human beings, five sheep, these are all numbers. But some Greeks made the observations that you can treat the numbers without regard to the things which are numbered. If you have five sheep and three goats, afterwards you will still have five sheep and three goats. Unless you go over to another genus and say 8 head of cattle, if cattle is the proper genus for goats. But this was a discovery, that numbers without any beings, (inaudible . . .). That is, the mathematical numbers are the mathematical numbers, and the non-mathematical numbers are the numbers used in ordinary life. Even if you count all things in the household, 5 sheep, 3 goats, 4 students, you still have a number of household things. (Inaudible . . .). The proportion may be continued or discontinued. Now discontinued is clear: A to B is equal to C to D. But if one of the members of the proportion is repeated, A to B is equal to B to C, it is a continuous proportion, and Aristotle says here, whether it is continued or discontinued is of no importance to the present subject.

So the justice of which he speaks here, without making it quite clear, is distributive justice, where you have to consider not only the thing exchanged, but also the quality or worth of the persons involved.

Justice here is not exactly what we should think it means, because democratic justice, according to Plato and Aristotle, denies distributive justice and asserts equal things to everybody, whether they are equal or unequal. The true principle of justice or equality is equal things to equal people, and unequal things to unequal people. That equality must not be understood in the way in which it is understood today.

Now Aristotle will then explain the principles of both exchange and crime under the heading of commutative justice. Commutative justice -- the character of the people to be equalized is developed, whether the man who committed a murder was a fine character, or a very lousy one, is irrelevant here. And that leads of course to complications -- how can a perfect gentleman be assumed to commit any crimes? After all we have read on the chapter on shame, that he does nothing of which he can be ashamed.

(Lecture ends here.)

Lecture XX
Aristotle's Ethics, May 1, 1968

Strauss: Now we are now studying the section on justice, Book V, Justice we may say is the most political of the virtues, surely the most immediately political of the virtues. Justice is related to equality, as Aristotle has stated more than once, so we may see that today, in the question of reapportionment, one man, one vote, equality. But there is also another side, even to our prevailing conception of justice. The welfare state -- we can say its principle is to everyone according to his need, i.e., to different people different things, i.e., inequality.

Aristotle makes a similar, but not identical distinction. There is a sphere of equality pure and simple, but there is also a sphere of inequality, only this is not related to needs. To everyone according to his merits, according to the contribution which he makes to society. Aristotle implies, in contradistinction to the now prevailing view, that society is not responsible for any injustices committed by nature or by the past, but society must make the best possible use of the available inequalities or differences. So there is a certain kinship as well as profound antagonism between the view of justice now prevailing and the Aristotelian view.

Now for a better understanding of Aristotle's teaching on justice, and its political implications, we must consider Plato's Laws. In 756e following, Aristotle speaks about the elections to office taking place in the best regime of the Laws. The selection of officials will form a mean between a monarchy and a democracy. And midway between these, our regime should always stand. For slaves will never be friends with masters, nor bad men with good, even when they occupy equal positions. For when equality is given to unequal things, the resultant will be unequal unless due measure is applied. And it is because of these two conditions that political organizations are filled with feuds.

There is an old and true saying that equality produces amity, which is right, well, and fitly spoken. But what the equality is which is capable of doing this is a very cumbersome question since it is very far from being clear. For there are two kinds of equality which though identically named, are often opposites in their practical results. One of these any state or lawgiver is competent to apply in the assignment of honors, namely the equality determined by measure, rate, and number, by simply employing the lot to give even results in the distributions. But the truest and best form of equality is not an easy thing for everyone to discern, and in the judgment of Zeus, and man is never (inaudible) in small measures, but insofar as he does assist either cities or individuals, he produces all things good, for he dispenses more to the greater and less to the smaller, giving due measure to each according to nature, agreeing with natural inequalities, and with regard to honors also,

by granting the greater to those that are greater in virtue, and the less to souls of the opposite character in respect of goodness and education, it assigns in proportion what is fitting to each. Indeed, it is precisely this, the second kind of inequality, which constitutes for us political justice, which is the object we must strive for. This equality is what we must aim at now that we are settling the city that is being planted. And whoever finds a city elsewhere at any time must make the same object the end of his legislation. Not the advantage of a few tyrants or of one or of some form of democracy, but justice always, and this consists in what we have just stated, namely the natural equality given on each occasion to things unequal. The natural equality to things unequal is of course unequal.

Nevertheless, it is necessary for every city at times to employ even this equality to a modified degree if it is to avoid involving itself in (inaudible) and discord in one section or another. For the reasonable and considerate, wherever employed, is an infringement of the perfect and exact as being contrary to strict justice. Strict justice is the one which gives unequal things to unequal people. This must be diluted for reasons of peace in time of peace. For the same reason it is necessary to make use also of equality of the lot on account of the discontent of the many and in doing so to pray, calling upon the gods and good luck to guide for them the lot (inaudible) toward the highest justice. In other words, although it is wholly a matter of the lot, the lot of whim, who will be elected, the lot might happen to be (inaudible) to the best men. That of course can only be achieved by divine intercession and on the human side by prayer.

That it is that necessity compels us to employ both forms of equality, but that form which needs good luck we should employ as seldom as possible. This is fundamentally the position of Aristotle as well. Aristotle's analysis of justice is much more detailed. Plato is speaking only of the political functions of the two kinds of equality, and Aristotle dealing also with the sub-political functions, which we have partly seen and partly will see.

Now I would like to read to you another statement from a famous man and a famous book, Hobbes' Leviathan, Chapter 15. This is a critique of Aristotle as you will see immediately. Justice by action is by writers divided into commutative and distributive, and the former, they say, consisteth in proportion arithmetical, the latter in proportion geometrical. Commutative therefore will place in the equality of value of the things contracted for, and distributive in the distribution of equal benefits to men of equal merits.

And now comes Hobbes' criticism. As if it were injustice to sell dearer than we buy, or to give more to a man than he merits, the value of all things contracted for, if measured by the appetite of

the contractors, and therefore the just value is that which they be contented to give. In other words, there is no just price. No intrinsically just price, but what they happen to agree upon. In times of the buyer's market it is different than in the times of the seller's market. And merit, besides that which is by covenant, with a performance on one part merits the performance on another part, falls under justive not commutative but distributive, is not due by justice but is rather rewarded by grace only. And therefore this distinction, in the sense in which it is usually expounded, is not right.

To speak properly, commutative justice is the justice of a contractor, that is, a performance of covenant in buying and selling, hiring and letting to hire, lending and borrowing, exchanging and bartering, and other (inaudible).

So this is one milestone in the change in the notion of justice which eventually led to the view now prevailing. Now there is one more thing in the text which one would have to consider in this connection, and that is at the end of Rousseau's Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, in the last note. Rousseau attacks the notion of distributive justice, i.e., the justice which gives unequal things to unequal people, and that has of course to be connected to the fundamental democratic view. What happened then to the need for unequal men which democracy has as much as any order is then less clear.

There was a time when Henry Wallace was one of the luminaries of the American political scene, and his key word, as the older ones of you may remember, was the common man, but his biographer entitled his book: Henry Wallace, the Uncommon Man. So I mean however much you may be in favor of the common man, uncommon men are needed and therefore there is also a need for different treatment of the uncommon man on the one hand and the common on the other, and in the old language, distributive justice.

Now we have first Aristotle's distinction between particular and universal justice, and we limit ourselves from now on entirely to particular justice. Particular justice is distributive or commutative, and distributive justice leads to proportional equality and commutative justice to simple or arithmetical equality. Aristotle speaks of geometric proportion and arithmetic proportion. What he means is this. In an arithmetic proportion, say 6 is the mean between 8 and 4, but 8 to 6 is not equal to 6 to 4. In other words, there are different proportions in the two cases. Properly proportional is a geometric proportion, where the proportions of the two parts are the same. The quantities are not the same. For example, 6 is the geometrical mean between 9 and 4, from 9 to 6 equal to 6 to 4, but the parts are obviously unequal.

We came more or less to this point last time. We should continue in 1131b, 24.

Reader: "The remaining kind is corrective justice, which appears

in private transactions, both voluntary and involuntary. This justice is of a different sort from the preceding, for justice in distributing common property always conforms with the proportion we have described, since when a distribution is made from the common stock, it follows the same ratio as that between the amounts which the several persons have contributed to the stock."

Strauss: In other words, this is applied to distribution, say of the dividends of a share-holder of a group, because different people contributed different amounts, percentages, would get different dividends. But the chief sphere of distributive justice is of course the distribution of honors.

Reader: "And the injustice opposed to justice of this kind is a violation of this proportion, but the just in private transactions, although it is the equal in a sense and the unjust and unequal, is not the equal according to geometrical, but to arithmetical proportions. For it makes no difference whether a good man has defrauded a bad man or a bad one a good one, though whether it is a good or a bad man who has committed adultery. The law looks only at the difference of the damage, seeing the parties as equal and merely asking whether one has done and the other suffered injustice, one inflicted and the other has sustained damage."

Strauss: Let us stop here perhaps for a moment. Now what do you say to this example which he gives here? It doesn't make any difference whether it was an honourable man who committed the crimes or a dishonourable man.

Student: It is strange that he should even talk about a dishonourable man.

Strauss: Yes, sure, (inaudible), even against conventional rights, how could he do such horrid things? This is quite extraordinary, and to make it quite clear, let us turn to 1128b, 21.

Reader: "For indeed the virtuous man does not feel shame, if shame is the feeling caused by base actions, since one ought not to do base actions, the distinction between acts really shameful and those reputed to be so is immaterial, since one ought not to do either, and so one never ought to feel shamed."

Strauss: The clear implication is that the virtuous man never really commits any impropriety, even merely conventional improprieties, of this magnitude. Now in the commentator, and I suppose he is not the only one who says this, the following explanation is given. Aristotle follows here the passage just read, in other words, (inaudible) law, but what do you say to this comment? I mean can a man like Aristotle follow (inaudible) law? He speaks of justice as justice, of any local use which may be very unjust and unreasonable.

So in order to make this commentary, one would have to show

that there is a difference between say the moral and the legal approach, and once this difference is granted, could conceivably accept a distinction made by one particular positive law. But there is no place for that distinction in Aristotle as we have seen. I mean as a crude practical distinction, yes, but that is a distinction in principle. The utmost one could say is this. This fact that in law, say in the case of a crime, the moral qualities of the criminal are not considered is a crude abstraction useful for certain practical purposes, but surely at the same time how true it is what Aristotle intimated at the beginning of the discussion of justice, that the just and the legal are not identical. The law follows certain conveniences which may be sound and which may be unsound. But these conveniences are not the same things as considerations of justice strictly speaking. At any rate, the difference between the two kinds of particular justice, distributive and commutative, makes clear the crudity of the simple egalitarian kind, and this crudity is precisely shown in this example. It doesn't make any difference what kind of a man committed a crime. We should say perhaps the virtuous man should be punished more severely than the habitually vicious man, because it is a much more disquieting thing if the pillar of society misbehaves than some bum. Or one could perhaps say that the pillar of society should be treated less severely because the temptation in this case must have been much more than flesh and blood could bear. One should be understanding in this thing.

At any rate, we would be compelled to raise the question which Aristotle does not raise here, what is the purpose of punishment? We have seen that Aristotle in this work rarely raises the question of the purpose of the various virtues. For Plato the question of the purpose of punishment is very important and frequently discussed, especially in the Laws, but also in other works.

Now we might perhaps throw a glance at the Platonic discussion and this will perhaps throw some light on a better understanding of Aristotle. According to the Platonic view, the only sane and rational purpose of punishment is betterment, not mere retribution tit for tat, but betterment. Now this is a view of course very well known although the term is probably rather rehabilitation rather than betterment, but I think fundamentally it means still betterment.

But this leads to difficulties and Plato draws our attention to these in this way. Plato takes it for granted that there are people who cannot be bettered, which is denied more or less by the now prevailing view and Plato has a very simple recipe. People who are incorrigible must be expelled or destroyed because there is nothing which can be done in their case. But think of a poor and stupid fellow who commits a petty theft. He will be examined by the authorities about whether he is corrigible or is he not corrigible. Or they will perhaps wait and say all right, he gets a year in jail, and afterwards let's see how he'll behave. Next day after he is out of jail, he commits another act of petty theft. Now this time he will

be punished more severely I suppose. But after some years, say after ten years, even the mildest judges will feel that he cannot be bettered. Then he must be killed, according to the sensible rule: betterment, or where betterment is impossible, destruction. But then we look at another case -- a man who committed murder, and the close examination of the man by the best psychologists available, Socrates and Plato, leads to the conclusion that this man would never again commit another murder. Think of Raskinikoff who learned the lesson that it is absolutely impossible to commit a murder, then would it not be sensible in this case to let him free in this case after he has gone through this experience that murder is a humanly impossible action, whereas the habitually petty thief would have to be destroyed.

We see then by thinking this through that there is obviously another consideration involved, apart from betterment or non-betterment, and that is the clarity of the crime, murder is a graver crime than petty theft, and we must have a scale then. This is an entirely different consideration and has nothing to do with the moral question as taken in itself.

These difficulties, which Aristotle does not discuss, make it intelligible why Aristotle falls back eventually on something like retri-bution as good for its own sake without any regard to the betterment or any other purpose which punishment must serve. So in other words, Aristotle does answer eventually the question of the purpose of punishment, but he does not give the most simple and most plausible and seemingly the most humane answer, preferred apparently by Plato, that the purpose of punishment is betterment.

So now let us go on. Unless someone would like to discuss this point.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: By all means, but the question is whether the retribution as such, i.e., a certain harmony, in punishment and crime, is not indispensable? And not merely the state of mind or character of the criminal. The starting point of Aristotle here of course is this. That in punitive justice we extract -- we have the principle, at least in earlier times, for the same crime, the same punishment. Whether the criminal is rich or poor, noble or (inaudible), or whatever it may be.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But still this is not helpful enough, because the question is does the punishment make the criminal better? This is a simile which is not sufficiently clear to our purpose for answering this question.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I believe that is true. That is also a reasonable notion that one must protect society against criminals. But this is not exhaustive. The key difference will appear later from the Aristotelian text, when he takes up the question whether justice is retribution or not.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, we can say that in the last century or so, the simply retributive notion of punishment has lost almost all the power that it possessed in former times. But today the only reason which would be admitted would be betterment and protection, but not retribution proper. Is this not a fair statement of the present state of discussion?

Aristotle seems to take the view that the core, as it were, of punishment is retribution. He devotes only one line to it, and we will come to it later. Let us go on then.

Reader: "Hence the unjust means here the unequal; the judge endeavors to equalize it. Inasmuch as one man has received and the other has inflicted a blow, and one has killed and the other been killed, the lines representing the suffering and doing of the deed are divided into unequal parts, but the judge endeavors to make them equal by the penalty or loss he imposes, taking away the gain. For the term 'gain' is used here in a general way in such cases, even though it is not strictly appropriate for some of them. For example, to a person who strikes another, nor is loss appropriate to the victim in this case, but at all events the results are called loss and gain respectively when the amount of the damage sustained comes to the estimate. Thus, while the equal is a mean between more and less, gain and loss are at once both more and less in contrary ways, more good and less evil being gain, and less good loss, and as the equal which we pronounce to be just is as we said a mean between them, it follows that justice in rectification will be the mean between loss and gain."

Strauss: What Aristotle is here driving at is to explain why he brings commutative justice in the narrower sense, the justice in exchange for goods and services, under the same heading as punitive justice. And therefore he construes crime in the following sense. A man hits another. This he has a gain -- this is the superiority of A -- hit B -- and therefore the judge must equalize the situation by giving B recompensation for that harm he has suffered. Just as in exchange, buying and selling and so on, there should be an equality of the merchandise and the price, or what is offered by A to what is offered by B. Here in both cases, in the case of exchange as well as punishment, simple equality is entered, whereas in distributive justice proportional equality. We must never forget this context.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: It seems Aristotle argues on a moral level than Plato does in the Republic. Both honor becomes more important, and the simple notions like retribution become more important.

Student: It seems that the philosophers would not mind so much, because they are not concerned with the type of honor . . .

Strauss: Yes, sure. and he would have no desire to give tit for tat. Now I think we can perhaps skip a section, and turn to 1132b, 11.

Reader: That's on page 279. "The terms lost and gained in these cases are borrowed from the operations of voluntary exchange."

Strauss: In other words, Aristotle knows it is somewhat inappropriate to say that if a man kills another man or hits him, he had a gain and the other suffered a loss, and the two must be equalized.

Reader: "There, to have more than one's own is called gain, and less than one had at the outset is called losing, as for instance in buying and selling, and in all other transactions sanctioned by law. While as a result of the transaction there is neither an increase nor a decrease, but exactly what the parties had of themselves, they say that they had of their own, and have neither lost nor gained. Hence, justice in voluntary transactions is a mean between gain and loss in a sense. It is to have after the transaction an amount equal to the amount one had before it."

Strauss: This is his general analysis of justice, as a starting situation. This starting situation is disturbed by some action, an argument over some money, or that I hit him. The starting situation is disturbing, and what is necessary is to restore it. In the case of the money I get merchandise. I am as rich as I was before. In the case of my hitting, I have gained and I must suffer a loss, namely go to jail or pay a fine or whatever the case may be. And then again the starting situation is pursuant. What Aristotle presupposes, of course, although it does not mean to exclude reflections, is that the starting situation was just. And therefore the disturbance brings in an element of injustice, and restoration is therefore necessary. And we can say all our criticisms of society as a whole, especially the marxists' criticism, implies that not only the starting situation is just, and therefore reflections of this kind are of no serious interest.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: First we were both alive, and then I killed him, there is inequality. Now then will I be (inaudible), and we are both dead, equality. Do you see the point? That there is equality restored. In another case I stole 50 dollars and I will be fined, not only to restore the 50 dollars, but also for the trouble and heartburn I caused to the other man, again equality.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle has a chapter on equity later, and according to him, equity is the corrective of positive law. The positive law cannot in all cases be just, and equity is an attempt to correct the positive law in the direction of justice. (The tape was changed on this point.) But always on the basis of positive law and therefore the equitable judgment is not necessarily simply just. It is only the kind of justice you can get within this particular legal system.

Student: When you spoke about the starting system, did Aristotle imply that everything in the cosmos is just when it is in its proper place?

Strauss: Yes.

Student: What type of things are capable of disobedience and why? In other words, are things of a natural will capable of injustice?

Strauss: Aristotle would regard this as metaphoric language. But some other thinkers, partly Plato and some other pre-socratic thinkers, did not hesitate to speak in such cases injustice. Aristotle would not do that, but he would say of course that the movements of the heavenly bodies, the motions, perfect regularity, unchangeable, whereas terrestrial beings, all kinds of disorder are possible there. But there is a tendency in these things toward the state of order, the heavy things tend toward the center of the earth. But you see Aristotle does not use this comparison. There is a certain similarity in spirit between what he thinks about justice and what he thinks about the natural things.

Student: What it is about men that dispose them particularly to unjust acts? Bad reasoning, or not performing their work properly?

Strauss: Man is a very complicated being, and his latitude is so much greater than that of a dog or any other animal, and therefore dogs lead more or less similar lives. Well, here of course the question of up bringing comes in too. But on the whole the latitude in which dogs move is much smaller than that in which human beings move. Man is meant to live the life of contemplation, but on the basis of a very heavy mass, the body, and the desires, partly necessary and partly unnecessary, which originate in the body, and therefore the success is limited to a few cases. Man's nature is enslaved in many ways, as Aristotle puts it. The disproportion between the highest in man and man in general is much greater than any disproportion you might find in any other species of animals. And that explains it in his view.

Now we come to the section on retaliation in the next section.

Reader: The view is also held by some that simple reciprocity is

justice. This was the doctrine of the Pythagoreans who defined the just simply as suffering reciprocally with one another."

Strauss: We can say tit for tat. If there is simple agreement between what man did and what he suffered.

Reader: "Reciprocity does not however coincide either with distributive or with corrective justice, although people mean to identify it with the latter, and quote the rule of Rhadamanthys: if a man suffer what he did, right justice will be done. For in many cases, reciprocity is at variance with justice. For example, if an officer strikes a man, it is wrong for the man to strike him back, and if a man strikes an officer, it is not enough for the officer to strike him but he should be punished as well. Again, it makes a great difference whether the act was voluntary or involuntary."

Strauss: So this simplistic Pythagorean notion that tit for tat is inadequate is clear in the case of distributive justice where there is proportionate equality and not simple equality. But what about corrective justice, primitive justice? Is there not a simple equality, as Aristotle puts it, regardless of whether the man was honourable or base, he gets the same punishment. Is this not simple equality? Murder, execution, theft, say two years of jail. But Aristotle denies it and he proves it here because we must make a distinction. When the magistrate, of course, strikes in his functi as magistrate, then you can't hit him back, but not the other way around. Here you see inequalities are considered by corrective justice.

Reader: "But in associations that are based on mutual exchange, the just in this sense constitutes the bond that holds the association together, that is, reciprocity in terms of a proportion and not in terms of exact equality in the return. For it is the reciprocal return of what is proportional that holds the state together."

Strauss: Let us consider that. So the proper sphere of retaliation, i.e., of simple equality, is the exchange of things, commutative justice narrowly understood. And this kind of tit for tat is namely a bond of the city. Why?

Reader: "For men demand that they shall be able to requite evil with evil, and if they cannot, they feel that they are in a position of slaves, and to repay good with good."

Strauss: So this is the reason for retribution. Men regard it as a state of slavery if they cannot inflict evil for evil. That is the only statement Aristotle makes on the subject. This is taken as something undeniable and must be accepted as a basis of criminal law. One can perhaps state it as follows. The paying of the loss suffered must be requited by the pleasure of the loss inflicted to the other fellow. This view is stated quite clearly by Hugo Grotius in his work on the Right of War and

Peace. There is a very long chapter on punishment and you would easily find this paragraph. This seems to be the Aristotelian view. And the same seems also to be true of the other side. To inflict, to do good for good, has the same kind of necessity. And they feel miserable if they cannot do it. Yes?

Reader: "And to repay good for good, failing which no exchange takes place and it is exchange that binds them together. This is why we set up a shrine to the graces in a public place, to remind men to return a kindness, since that it is a special characteristic of grace, since it is a duty not only to repay a service done one, but at another time to take the initiative in doing the service oneself."

Strauss: Even to begin with that. Yes?

Reader: "Now proportionate requital is affected by diagonal conjunction, for example, let A be a builder, B a shoemaker, C a house, and D a shoe. It is required of the builder to receive from the shoemaker a proportion of the product of his labor, and give him a portion of the product of his own. Now if proportionate equality between the product is established, and then reciprocation takes place, the requirement indicated will have been achieved, and if this is not done, the bargain is not equal and intercourse does not continue. For it may happen that the product of one of the parties is worth more than that of the other, and it means therefore that they have to be equalized."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. What does Aristotle mean by that diagonal conjunction? It is very easy to show this at the blackboard. (Inaudible, and that is still the housebuilder, and he builds a house. And here we have the shoemaker and he makes shoes, so that the diagonal conjunction is this: the housebuilder gets the shoes and the shoemaker gets a house. And so both parties are satisfied. The housebuilder can build a house for himself, and he doesn't need anybody else for that. But he cannot make the shoes; he needs somebody else. The same applies to the shoemaker, or for that matter to the farmer. This is what he means by diagonal conjunction.

Student: Is the relationship between houses and shoes so that so many shoes are worth so many houses . . .

Strauss: Let us say one house; let us be realistic.

Student: Is there implied a relationship between the housebuilder and the shoebuilder similar? That is to say, is the fact that a hundred pair of shoes is worth one house not simply because 100 pair of shoes is worth one house, but because what the shoemaker will get for his house . . .

Strauss: Yes, only Aristotle doesn't start from the money angle. He starts the other way around. He brings in the money as a means

to make incommensurable things commensurable. I mean it is clear that the house is more valuable than a shoe, other things being equal, because (inaudible) of a house is worth less than a certain pair of shoes. But I said other things being equal. And I would say that obviously they are entirely different things and they have no natural commensurability. How do we know how many pair of shoes are the equal of a house, and here is where money comes in. Aristotle will explain this in the immediate sequel.

Reader: "This holds good with the other arts as well which would have passed out of existence if the active element did not produce or receive the equivalent in quantity and quality of the passive element received. For an association for interchange of services is not formed between two physicians but between a physician and a farmer and generally between persons who are different and who may be unequal or in that case they have to be equalized."

Strauss: One should not say merely may be unequal, but are unequal. And this is the problem. There is no common denominator ordinarily and therefore how can there be justice if there is no way to discovery of equality here? This question will be answered by Aristotle in the sequel.

Reader: Hence all commodities exchanged must be able to be compared in some way. It is to meet this requirement that men have introduced money. Money constitutes in a manner a middle term, where it is the measure of all things and so of their superior or inferior value. That is to say, how many shoes are equivalent to a house or to a given quantity of food. As therefore a builder is to a shoemaker, so much such and such a number of shoes be to a house, or to a given quantity of food."

Strauss: This is the diagonal conjunction of which we spoke.

Reader: "For without this reciprocal proportion, there can be no exchange or association. And it cannot be secured unless the commodities in question be equal in a sense."

Strauss: Here we have an amazingly explicit statement about the purpose of a virtue. Exchange, association, community, are obviously needed but they would not be forthcoming if there were no equality available, say as between the physician and the farmer. The services of the physician and the goods brought to town by the farmer. And therefore this is obviously rational. We have here an end. We have seen how rarely Aristotle speaks of the end, but in this case, the most massive case of commutative justice, perhaps the most simple case, he does speak of that purpose.

Reader: "It is therefore necessary that all commodities measured by some one standard as we said before, and this standard is in truth demand which is what holds everything together since if man seeks

to have want or if their wants alter, things will go on no longer or will be on different lines."

Strauss: So this is then the shoes and the house are qualitatively different entirely, are not exchangeable. They become essentially on the basis of a third which is present in the two cases, and that third is want, and that brings it about -- equality.

Reader: "But the man has come to be conventionally represented by money and this is why money is called nomisma, customary currency, because it does not exist by nature, but by custom, nomos, and can be altered and rendered useless at will."

Strauss: So money is conventional, obviously dollars, pounds, and so on. You can do it this way or that way but it doesn't make any difference. Money is essentially conventional. The reason for that is there cannot be a natural currency, and the reason for that is that there is no natural equality. The equality must be brought about by human fiat. This fact that equality must be brought about is rooted in human nature. But this does not make the product of that human action, namely the introduction of money, in itself a natural thing. Where it is natural, it is unequal as he has said in a,18.

Reader: "There will therefore be reciprocal proportion when the products have been equated, that is farmer be to shoemaker, so may the shoemaker's product be the farmer's product. And when they exchange their products, they must reduce them to the form of the proportion. Otherwise, one of the two extremes will have both the excesses, whereas when they have their own they then are equal, to form an association together, because equality in this sense can be established in their case. Farmer A, food C, shoemaker B, shoe product equalizes D. Whereas if it were impossible for reciprocal proportion to be effected in this way, there could be no association between them. That it is demand which by serving as a single standard holds such an association together is shown by the fact that when there is no demand for mutual service on the part of both or at least of one of the parties, no exchange takes place between them. As when someone needs something that one has oneself, for instance the state offering a license to export corn in exchange for wine . . ."

Strauss: Yes, this is a somewhat dubious passage. Now only as long as the demand is actual, are these men potential partners and is there therefore equality. When the demand does not exist, no possibility of exchange.

Student: At the beginning of this passage, you said that there had to be a proportion so that the farmer is to the shoemaker, (inaudible . . .), does that imply that there is a consideration here of the men involved, and that the farmer is either higher or lower than . . .

Strauss: Aristotle does not develop that, but Thomas Aquinas explains it by not of the men involved but of the expense incurred and the labor. So that expenses plus labor must be the same on both sides. That is not a labor theory of value because the expense is a separate fact. They are not reduced in its turn to labor as it is in the marxist doctrine.

Student: Is not it somewhat curious that this discussion is taking place in this political book, in that by the very nature of the discussion it seems to me eminently unpolitical, and the type of (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: They are (inaudible), but they are not despicable, are they?

Student: In terms of the politics, I would expect this part of the book to be least understandable. I mean it is a subject not even really worthy of politics.

Strauss: If I did not know you so well, I would say this is snobbish.

Student: No, no, I am saying it seems from the understanding of the political community that these things are somehow not . . .

Strauss: But let us take an aristocratic position, do you expect the gentlemen to make their own shoes or to have their shoes made at home by incompetent slaves, rather than by very competent shoe-makers? If that is so, if there must be division of labor precisely in an aristocratic society, then there must be a way and means in that society as to make it worthwhile (inaudible . . .).

Student: I was asking the question because it seemed to be that parts of the chapter in his book on justice I would think are most relevant to the political community, for example, the chapters on equity and natural justice and that type of justice which deals with the exchange of honours. (Inaudible . . .).

Strauss: But perhaps there was a great confusion about this lower kind of justice, (inaudible . . .).

Student: The areas where the most confusion is is precisely in the areas where he writes off one sentence (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: But let me state it somewhat differently. Precisely because Aristotle regards the strictly egalitarian form of justice as the lower, he must bring out its character, its sphere, its limits, and that he does here.

Student: To go back to the Politics again, obviously there is an important consideration for a statesman would be to choose the proper economic realm between the household and the polis.

Strauss: Yes, well he speaks about the household in the first book

of the Politics. What is the main point? Each householder of normal intelligence knows by himself that he must at least preserve an paternal estate, so that he can be available also financially for public service. I don't have the impression that he devotes an inordinately large space to this kind of justice -- how much is it? one and a half pages in my edition. Compared with the space he devoted to magnanimity or munificence and liberality and so on. Even if it is a low virtue, ordinary honesty in business dealings, this is of some importance.

Student: But it seemed like this would be a very easy division in modern times where economic issues have become so important.

Strauss: In modern times economics means something very different from what it meant for Aristotle. Today it has to do with the market, and in Aristotle's time it meant primarily the management of one's household. Therefore, it is strictly an affair of the individual householder. I mean the economic man in the classical sense is the man who minds his own business, and a modern economic man is naturally a public man, because the market is only public. And not only in a metaphorical sense.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle would have nothing to do with Adam Smith. Sure that is clear; there is no absolute sacred right of property, and therefore there can be for example an upper limit to what a man may own. Both Plato and Aristotle have to take that for granted and there are quite a few other limitations on property rights. It may be that there is a family farm, and this family farm may not be divided, and so if there is more than one son, the other son or sons must marry heiresses; if not, a colony must be sent out in order to avoid overpopulation. But these things do not work out in practice so smoothly, and the consequence is that the best-laid plans, best-laid regime, will come into troubles which could not have been prevented by any human foresight, one reason being that people do not generate just one son and one daughter, but some more, some less, and this creates some disorder, which as orderly people we might deplore, against which not much can be done. Or you must have very severe laws, but even that would not quite work out. We don't have to go into that. You can easily figure that out for yourself.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But what do you mean by political economy?

Student: Certainly not at all what Aristotle means.

Strauss: Yes sure, but what do you say is political economy? Is there no economy on the part of the polis? I mean, for example, is the polis not the owner of property, is the polis not in need of money? Income, taxes, and other forms of revenue. Do you think

one could call this political economy? Or public economy?

Student: It would seem that the political man (inaudible) . . .

Strauss: How could he do that? Think of Pericles, and how much he had to worry about the Athenian polis in order to be able to build ships to send out armies? As Thucydides makes clear in his (inaudible) on Homer, you know that the Trojan War lasted so long because the Greeks had no money, there was no money economy. Or as Cervantes puts it in a slightly different context, but not fundamentally different, (inaudible) of knight errantry. Nothing is said whether the knights had clean shirts with them to change from time to time.

We only have to read the statement in the Rhetoric on what the political statesman has to know, and public finance is one of them of course. But the question is interesting that it was not called political or public economy in ancient times. The word economy was enlarged, for example, people spoke of economy of the universe, of the gods managing the universe, their household. People spoke of economy of the truth which means to dole it out in the proper doses, which is also an economic action, an action of thrift. But they didn't speak of political economy. Even in modern times, come to think of it, the original name was not political economy, but do you know what it was? Political arithmetic. Sir William Petty, Hobbes' younger friend, you see that there are a few family relations in this -- he wrote a book and he called it arithmetic, because statistics as we say today, counting heads, counting the property of a community, counting the numbers of the various sects, say in Holland, considerations regarded as very important for political purposes.

But for Aristotle this goes without saying. The passage is purely instrumental and therefore it is not his primary subject.

Student: You said that in Aristotle according to Aquinas value is not (inaudible) to labor only . . .

Strauss: What does this mean? For example, let us say a man wants to have a golden bed and there is a certain amount of labor. Why is gold so much more expensive than iron? Because it is rarer -- that would have been the old answer, whereas say the marxist answer is that the extraction of gold is so much more expensive than the extraction of iron and you can therefore reduce the difference in value between gold and iron to the difference regarding labor. So the value of any valuable thing can ultimately be expressed in money alone, not only of money's worth, as Aristotle has said, but it can be understood ultimately in terms of labor. Not in terms of demand. But demand is the spur with a view to which the unequal things can be equalized.

Here again one would have to go to the heroes of modern times, in this case to Locke, to Locke's famous statement in Chapter 5,

if I remember well, of property, where he says nature supplies almost the only worthless materials. The value comes from labor, only there are no things which are in themselves valuable, but they acquire value through human labor. This of course is diametrically opposed to the human view.

(The tape was changed at this point.)

There were societies in which title to full membership, to citizenship, was limited to virtuous people, to the better people, as (inaudible) said in your parent's lifetime. This is regarded today as very unjust. Aristotle finds this perfectly just. For example, if the better man must flatter worse men, he would regard that as a shocking condition, but that the better man has more power in society than the worse man, he found perfectly in order. But generally stated, Aristotle found that in spite of all imperfections, we see here and there and everywhere, the world is fundamentally in order and does not have to be brought into order by revolution, be it political, social, or technological. This is undeniable. To that extent he was (inaudible . . .). Aristotle found the world fundamentally in order; there are certain blemishes which can be corrected no doubt; others are not truly blemishes if one does not take a very narrow view, if one considers the whole and considers what can be reasonably expected.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: No, the good of man as the possible good of man. I mean fantastic good of man is no good of man, possible as we would say. And that these things, quite a few things, strike us as harsh is undeniable. For example, there are some ladies here, and I apologize to them, but Aristotle in a very old-fashioned way thought about the place of the ladies, surely not in politics. But if you think of only one thing, to make it more palatable, that our present-day arrangement, our hopes for the future, are based on an economy of plenty, whereas Aristotle took it for granted that there will always be an economy of scarcity, you will see that it was not just his being a vicious reactionary or however you might call that which is responsible for that. Vicious reactionary in the case of Aristotle is based on the presumption that there could be progressives, that there have been, progressives in classical antiquity. There was a classical scholar, or he is still alive, I am happy to report, and now I forgot his name. He wrote a book about the liberal temper in philosophy. Some nasty people called it the liberal distemper, and this man asserted that there was a whole line of liberal thinkers like the French philosophers of the 18th century, and their English equivalents. This didn't exist. We cannot believe that the party lines as they existed in England since the 17th century and in continental Europe since the 18th century or that anything of this kind existed in classical antiquity.

To mention only one point -- it was always understood, until these modern 17th and 18th centuries, that the common people, demos, if

bigoted and if only in the upper, better, classes, will you find people who are not bigoted. In other words, there was no popular enlightenment, which came out of the great changes which have taken place since the 17th century. One must take in the whole picture, and not extract a statement out of the context, like Aristotle says that slavery is just, and say look, what a black man. I mean morally black man. Well, you have to study it in the context, and in the context it looks somewhat different, and the context means not only the context of the Politics, it means the context of all the premises which Aristotle regarded as established and which he shared with all his contemporaries, and not only his contemporaries in Greece but elsewhere as well and in later times as well, the fundamental change being only in the 17th century.

We must stop here unfortunately. Next time we will begin the section on natural right, I hope. I invite you to read if you can the section in the Rhetoric on natural right, and there is a parallel which we must also consider, Book I, Chapter 13, and Book I, Chapter 15, paragraphs 5 to 7. These are the two passages which we have to consider before turning to that single page devoted to natural right by Aristotle.

Lecture XXI
Aristotle's Ethics, May 6, 1968

Strauss: Let us now begin at 1133b, 1.

Reader: "There will therefore be reciprocal proportion when the products have been equated, so that as farmer is to shoemaker, so will the shoemaker's product be to the farmer's product. And when they exchange their products, they must reduce them to the form of a proportion. Otherwise, one of the two extremes will have both the excesses, whereas when they have their own, they then are equal, and can form an association together. Equality in this sense can be established in their case. Farmer A, Shoe C, Shoemaker B, Shoemaker's Product Equalized D. Whereas if it were impossible for reciprocal proportion to be effected in this way, there could be no association between them. That it is demand which by serving as a single standard holds such an association together is shown by the fact that when there is no demand for mutual service on the part of both both or at least of one of the parties, no exchange takes place between them. This inequality of demand has therefore to be equalized. Now money serves us as a guarantee of exchange in the future. Supposing we need nothing at the moment, it ensures an exchange will be possible when a need arises, for it meets the requirement of something we can produce in payment to obtain the thing we need. Money, it is true, is liable to the same fluctuation of demand as commodities. Its purchasing power varies at different times, but it tends to be comparatively constant. Hence, the proper thing is for all commodities to have their prices fixed. This will ensure that exchange and consequently association will always be possible."

Strauss: Wait a moment. There is one expression which we should consider. He says money literally in that money wishes to be always the same. This term 'wishing' occurs also in Plato and Aristotle elsewhere. How can it be said of money that it wishes to be something? Aristotle also says that nature wishes that the sons of gentlemen should (inaudible) gentlemen and so on. what about money which is after all the proper (inaudible) of the non-natural?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, he would probably say meaning. Money is meant to be always the same.

Reader: "Money then serves as a measure which makes things commensurable or reduces them to equality. If there were no exchange, there would be no association, and there can be no exchange without equality, and no equality without commensurability. Know therefore that it is impossible for things so different to become commensurable in the strict sense. Our demand furnishes a

sufficiently accurate common measure for practical purposes. There must therefore be some one standard and this accepted by agreement, which is why it is called nomisma."

Strauss: On the basis of an hypothesis, of an assumption. It is here used in opposition to in truth. In truth it is impossible that there be a thing making things commensurable. But things can be made commensurable on the basis of an agreement or an assumption. This opposition between assumption and truth has here the same meaning as the one of the distinction between nature and convention which we have found before.

Reader: "... which is why it is called nomisma, customary currency. For such a standard makes all things commensurable, since all things can be measured by money. Let A be a house, B ten minae, and C a bedstead. Then A equals one-half of B, supposing the house to be worth or equal to five minae. And C, the bedstead, equals one-tenth of B. It is now clear how many bedsteads are equal to one house -- 5. It is clear that before money existed, this rate of exchange was actually stated, 5 beds for a house. Since there is no real difference between that and the price of five beds for a house."

Strauss: Well, this house is obviously very cheap, and this is in a way amusing, but it should not be too amusing, because we would probably find some other example from our world which would be very funny, in the eyes of the Greeks.

So this is the end of the thematic discussion of particular justice as such. But now Aristotle begins with a kind of long corollary to this discussion, and part of the corollary is the page on natural right, which is a very difficult page as we shall see, very hard to understand. Some clue to its understanding is provided by the fact that the discussion of natural right forms part of this corollary. What the meaning of this corollary is will appear from the beginning, to which we turn now.

Reader: "We have now stated what justice and injustice are in principle."

Strauss: Literally, what is the just and the unjust. But which includes also just and unjust as human habits.

Reader: "From the definition given, it is plain that just conduct is a mean between doing and proffering injustice, for the former is to have too much and the latter too little. And justice is a mode of observing the mean, though not in the same way as the other virtues are. But because it is related to a mean, while injustice is related to the extremes."

Strauss: Now this is a point which Aristotle makes and which is crucial. That justice is a mean as all other good or noble things are, but in a profoundly different way. Why? To make it quite

clear, we have to speak of the difference between justice and the virtues, a distinction which we sometimes find. In the case of the virtues, meaning the virtues other than justice, the mean is not the same for all. For example, say liberality, differs between a very rich and a very poor man. Socrates could be liberal by spending much less money than say (inaudible), another rich man. And in the simplest case, moderation, temperance. We remember the example of (inaudible), who by eating enormous amounts of steak was still moderate, and any other man would have been immoderate if he had taken in so many things.

Now here is the point. In the case of justice, there is no such relativity to the doer. Take the simple case of buying and selling. Whether you are rich or poor, strong or weak, fat or thin, does not make any difference as regards the just price. This is at least the Aristotelian view. Also, that if you have the misfortune of committing murder, it does not make any difference whether you are a nice man or a nasty man, as Aristotle has made clear. So in the case of just things, no relativity to the doer, whereas in the other cases, relativity is necessary. This is deceiving in a way for the discussion which follows, and let us see what Aristotle has to say about it.

Reader: 1134a, 1. "Also, justice is that quality in virtue of which a man is said to be disposed by deliberate choice that which is just, and when distributing things between themselves and another, or between two others, not to give too much to himself and too little to his neighbor, but what is desirable. And too little to himself and too much to his neighbor of what is (inaudible) but to each of what is proportionately equal. And similarly, when he is distributing between two other persons. Injustice on the contrary is similarly related to the unjust which is a disproportionate excess or deficiency of something beneficial or harmful. Hence, injustice is excess and defect, in the sense that it results in excess and defect. Namely, in the offenders' own case, an excess of anything that is generally speaking beneficial and a deficiency of anything harmful, and in the case of others, though the result as a whole is the same, the deviation from proportion may be in either direction, as the case may be. Of the injustice done, the smaller part is the suffering, and the larger part the doing of injustice. So much may be said about the nature of justice and injustice, the just and the unjust regarding universally."

Strauss: This is largely repetitious, but it paves the way for the following discussion which began by the remark that the mean in the case of justice is something very different from the mean in the case of the other virtues. Now let us first try to reach some clarity about this difference.

If we look first at the beginning of the next section . . .

Reader: "But seeing that a man may commit injustice without actually being unjust, what is it that distinguishes those unjust acts

the commission of which renders a man unjust under one of the various forms of injustice, for example, a thief, or an adulterer, or a brigand. Or shall we rather say that the distinction does not lie in the quality of the act, for a man may have intercourse with a woman knowing who she is from the motive of deliberate choice but under the influence of passion."

Strauss: We have seen this or similar examples before. They have to do with the peculiar character of justice. In the case of justice, the character of the individual seems to be less important than in the case of the other virtues, and inversely, it is therefore possible to act unjustly without being an unjust man. Justice seems to be much less relative to the individual, and is much less relative to the individual, and therefore also bound much less to the qualities of the individual than the other virtues. Since justice is essentially toward the other, the emphasis shifts naturally on the harshest in contradistinction to what is in the individual's own intentions. Now this is now corrected. The man who acts unjustly is not an unjust man. Therefore, we have to see what precisely makes a man unjust. In other words, how many or what kind of adulteries are needed in order to make a man who only acts unjustly into an unjust man?

What is unjust -- this cannot be answered without raising the question, what is just? And we have therefore to consider various possibilities, some discussed before, as to what is just. This is what the sequel is about.

Reader: "In such a case, though he has committed injustice, he is not an unjust man. For instance, he is not a thief or guilty of theft, not an adulterer though he has committed adultery, and so forth."

Strauss: So this is the point which we (inaudible) -- where to draw the line between the occasional evil doer and the evil-doing man. The simply evil man.

Reader: "The relation of reciprocity to justice has been stated already."

Strauss: That is a reference to the Pythagorean doctrine which we've read. This is one possibility -- that the just might be the reciprocal, and here the question of intention does not arise at all, because here as Aristotle presents it voluntariness or involuntariness do not enter. A man has killed another man -- the reciprocal, he will be killed. And even voluntariness does not enter, and still less intentionality.

Reader: "But we must not forget that the subject of our investigation is at once justice simply and political justice. Political justice . . ."

Strauss: One second. So in other words, Aristotle defines how we seek what justice is, and what requires that we seek emphatically, in the highest degree, to the fullest degree, what is just, and the unqualifiably just, and the politically just. How are these two things related to each other? That is important, because Aristotle does not explain it. At least he does not specifically explain it. I believe the sequel will show that they are identical. The unqualifiably just and the politically just are the same. We will see whether this is true.

Reader: "Political justice means justice between free and actually or proportionally equal persons, living a common life for the sake of being self-sufficient. Hence, between people not such, political justice cannot exist, but only a sort of justice in a metaphorical sense."

Strauss: In other words, these forms of justice, whatever they may be, say between a master and a slave, or between two foreigners meeting in a third city let us say, that is not fully justice. We will later on try to explain this.

So it would seem that this passage shows that the unqualifiably just and the politically just are identical. And now he explains this more fully.

Reader: "Justice can only exist between those whose neutral relations are regulated by law and law exists among those between whom there is a possibility of injustice. For the administration of the law means the discrimination of what is just and what is unjust. Persons therefore between whom injustice can exist act unjustly towards each other, although unjust action does not necessarily involve injustice."

Strauss: That is a repetition of what we have seen before.

Reader: "To act unjustly, meaning to assign oneself too large a share of things generally good and too small a share of things generally evil."

Strauss: The argument runs as follows. The unqualifiably just is the political just. Now a kind of confirmation -- justice in the full sense can exist only among men who are connected or who are held together by law, but law is of course political. Hence, unqualified justice and political justice are identical.

Aristotle develops this latter point toward the end of the Ethics. 1180a, 18, which we might consult.

Reader: "Now paternal authority has not the power to compel obedience, nor indeed, speaking generally, has the authority of any individual unless he be a king or the like."

"Law, on the other hand, is a rule emanating from a certain wisdom and intelligence that has compulsory force."

Strauss: In order to make men good, the domestic authority, paternal authority, is sufficient, and the only thing which can fulfill this highest function of political life to make the citizens good and doers of noble deeds is the law and hence (inaudible).

Law and justice in the full sense are called sensible. This needs the basis of a long commentary. How do we know that on the basis of what we have read in Aristotle? He said something about the relation of the just and the legal.

Student: He said they weren't necessarily the same.

Strauss: How did he put it in his nice way? Somehow. That legal things are somehow (inaudible), and somehow is a big deep ditch into which we will not try to fall now.

Reader: "This is why we do not permit a man to rule."

Strauss: Why do we not allow a man to rule, but the (inaudible). One reading, which is perfectly as good as the Laws, as we have seen from the parallel passage in the 10th book.

Reader: "Because a man rules in his own interest and becomes a tyrant. But the function of a ruler is to be the guardian of justice, and if of justice then of equality. A just ruler seems to make nothing out of his office, for he does not allow himself a larger share of things generally good, unless it be proportionate to his merit, so that he labors for others, which accounts for the same mentioned above. Justice is the good of others. Consequently, some recompense has to be given him in the shape of honour and dignity. It is those whom such rewards do not satisfy that make themselves tyrants."

Strauss: In principle there could be a rule of a just man, as is stated by Aristotle in other places, even in the Ethics later on, in the Politics more emphatically, and a just man would be a man who would altogether devote himself to others, and therefore ruling has no attraction and therefore he needs recompensation other than ruling. You know this, I trust.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Taxes are a burden. But still, let us state the simple case -- all men whose second name begins with an A have to pay three times as much taxes as the other citizens. Would this be in the long run desirable? So in other words, equality not only of benefits but also of burdens. And the unjust man is precisely the one who wants to have too much of the benefits and too little of the burdens.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I used the extreme example, but there are approximations to it even in actual cities, where conventional distinctions were taken as if they were natural (inaudible). The best regime, if we assume that such a thing is possible, as we should, would of course never have an unjust law, an unjust judgment. It goes without saying because the men who rule and make the laws and are the judges are by definition perfect gentlemen, and therefore nothing can happen. That is the premise. Now whether that is feasible in such an imperfect world -- that is a long question.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The nomos is the logos, but a logos of a certain kind. A logos who has found the (inaudible) of the politeia, be it the gentleman, be it the demos, be it the combination or whatever. Is not a very law a logos? In the most external sense. He who (inaudible) will be punished in that and that way. You can only say that there is an ambiguity there because this sounds like a prophecy or a prediction. A prediction is not always fulfilled. One should add the qualification, if he is caught. But this of course the legislator in his solemnity refuses to do. And you can easily see why. There is a certain impropriety in making this implication clear. A kind of pointing to criminality as a way out of doing what the legislator commands.

Student: When you said that the just man would be the man who would devote himself to others, would it be possible in this sense that if the best regime had the just men ruling, is it possible then for a good man to be a just man in that instance or in any regime, namely to rule because he has devoted himself to others who would be his inferiors, it would in a sense be being unjust themselves.

Strauss: Yes, this is a certain complication. The question is whether that is not preferable to being ruled by inferior men. This is in a way the central political argument of the Republic more than of Aristotle. But Aristotle seems to allude to that when he speaks to this pay that the just man or the ruler has to receive, an argument which occurs in the second book of the Republic.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: You are speaking of the magnanimous man as defined in Book IV. He demands for himself high honors and he gets it. If he were to become a dogcatcher, he would reject that honour as a small honour, but if he should be elected President of the United States, he will say, I will not run, but if elected, I will serve. Running is bad; that is a sign of (inaudible), or enlightened I beat you.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, but on the other hand, you must not aim too high. If you do that, this whole sphere becomes invisible, and that is precisely why Aristotle has written the Ethics in the way he did, keeping from us, from our sight, philosophy as long as possible because otherwise if philosophy appears, these things become dark.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And I would say it is perfectly reasonable what Aristotle does, for we are not philosophers, as Aristotle sense, and therefore we have to be reasonable.

Student: You have the example from literature that Shakespeare presents us of (inaudible), who is not desirous of accepting the honours, the type of honors which are necessary at least to rule, I mean that's not really a philosophical problem . . .

Strauss: Socrates was not desirous of any honours -- so that is an example. But almost all men are not Socrates's, and therefore for them honours are very important, and among these men, the tremendous majority of men who are eager to have honours, there are some outstanding men who are willing to accept only high honours. Now this may be sheer folly on such part; there are such people who regard themselves as worthy of honours high. We can dismiss them as fools. But then there are others who demand high honours for themselves and deserve them. It is true that one can present such people as a bit ridiculous. I use the example of General Montgomery of (inaudible) time who can easily be held up for ridicule and yet he doubtless deserves the high honours. But to the extent to which we find it slightly ridiculous, we are probably affected by the presence in our universe of philosophy or some equivalent of philosophy, something trans-political. But within the political sphere, we must take this very seriously even if it hurts us.

Now did I answer your question? Good. I also think he means to make clear what justice par excellence, that is to say, political justice, is, and that has been clear up to this point. Now let us read the rest of this section.

Reader: "Justice between master and slave and between father and child is not the same as absolute and political justice but only analogous to them. For there is no such thing as injustice in the absolute sense towards what is one's own. And a (inaudible) or a child who has reached a certain age and becomes independent, is as it were part of one's self, and no one chooses to harm one's self. Hence, there can be no injustice towards them, or nothing just or unjust in the political sense."

Strauss: There is therefore no justice towards oneself.

Reader: "For these, as we saw, are embodied in law and exists between persons whose relations are naturally regulated by law."

"That is, persons who share equally in ruling and in being ruled. Hence, justice exists in a fuller degree between husband and wife than between father and children, or master and slave. In fact, justice between husband and wife is domestic justice in the real sense, so this too is different from political justice."

Strauss: These are the only specimens which Aristotle gives us of justice which is not political, you might say, sub-political justice, and these are the relations of a man not to a fellow citizen but to what is his own, be it a slave or a child or a wife. The slave -- it is clear that he is simply the property. If he takes away something from the slave, he takes away his property from his property. That is to say, there is no injustice involved. The same is true of a child; if a father takes away a toy to which his child is very much addicted, that is not injustice, the toy being the father's property. He might be unkind and one could perhaps say, and Aristotle would admit that, that in some sense it is unjust to have given it to a child, but Aristotle would add that in some sense no law would provide for that, and no judge would take on this case. The case of the wife is somewhat different because there may be some laws regarding dowries and so on, very substantial things, and therefore the wife belongs also to other citizens, father, brothers, and therefore she is almost a citizen.

But the interesting case of course would be -- let us take two human beings, one being a freeman and one a slave, but belonging to different cities. Is there no relation of justice between them? They meet across the road, and one begins to throw stones at the other, wholly unprovoked, and then finally the whole thing ends with the killing. Is this not a case where justice, or injustice for that matter, would occur? Aristotle says so. He speaks in the Ethics later on that there are relations of justice among all human beings, that there can be no friendship between a freeman and a slave. As slave. But there can be friendship between the freeman and the slave, if the slave's capacity has a human being, for there can be friendship and justice between all beings that possess speech and reason. So surely there are relations of justice among complete strangers, free or slaves, male or female, or what have you?

But what Aristotle means is that these relations of justice are extremely limited. Justice reaches its fullness only among fellow citizens, where all possible relations of justice can be fully actual. And they cannot be fully actual in the sub-political forms of justice.

Now we have learned from this, that in order to find out what the difference between an unjust man and a man who happens to commit an unjust action -- we have to find out what injustice is. Therefore, we have to find out what justice is. And therefore, in the first place, what is emphatically just, unqualifiably just. And that proved to be the politically just. And the political justice proved to be that justice obtaining from among fellow citizens, i.e., obtaining among men united and ruled with law. This seems to lead

to the consequence that the sphere of justice is (inaudible) us completely with the sphere of law. Is then justice essentially based on law? Is all justice legal, conventional? And Aristotle approaches this question in the next chapter. A short page, a simple page, on natural right.

For the better understanding of this passage, we should have looked at the Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter 13, which I will read to you now. Justice and injustice have been defined with regard to laws and human beings in a twofold manner. By law I understand the peculiar laws and the common laws (let me say universal law in order to avoid the ambiguity of the term 'common law' in English). Particular law and universal law. The peculiar law is the one which people have established for themselves in their relations, and this peculiar law is unwritten and also partly written. The universal law is the law according to nature, so whereas the one kind of law is man-made, there is a law which is not man-made. For there is, as all men divine, an injustice which is by nature universal, even if there is no community nor convention among men as Socrates' Antigone appears to say, that it is forbidden, that it is unjust although forbidden, to bury her brother, since this is just by nature. And then he quotes two verses from the Antigone, from neither today nor yesterday, but always does this live, and no one knows from where it came to sight. And as (inaudible) says about not killing animate beings, for this is not just for one people and unjust for others, as killing cows is for the Hindus and not for other people, and as (inaudible) says in his messianic speech where he seems to say that god let all men be free, nature has not made a single man a slave.

So Aristotle says that all men divine that there is a universal law, a natural law, nomos. And he gives three examples. Let us consider the examples starting from the last. Slavery is radically unnatural. Is this a good example of a natural law according to Aristotle? What is Aristotle's official teaching regarding slavery?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: So this is not a good example. (Inaudible) natural law forbidding the killing of inanimate beings. Was Aristotle a vegetarian or in favor of vegetarianism? No, he is not. In the case of Antigone I do not know or have sufficient evidence to say whether Aristotle regarded Antigone's view of her right as a natural right, and whether he agreed with that.

It is an open question then, but surely two of the three examples which Aristotle gives of the natural law -- these are not good examples from Aristotle's point of view. Now why could Aristotle do such a thing? This occurs in the Rhetoric, and the Rhetoric deals with what kinds of arguments a man must use in order to achieve an acquittal or a condemnation in a law court, and in this connection it becomes necessary sometimes to use the positive law, if the positive law speaks for the defendant, or if you want to have a condemnation, then you appeal to the natural law. And that is

explicitly stated, and vice versa. So in other words, natural law is an important topic of the Rhetoric. We cannot regard this passage of the Rhetoric as evidence that Aristotle believed in natural law.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But that is not so simple because the polis has also gods and therefore what the gods demand might be in disagreement with what the human ruler says, but the relation to the polis would still exist. I believe the context here in the Ethics is this. Aristotle has created the impression that the true right is the political right. And the political right is the legal right, and therefore he must then raise the question, but then is all right legal, due to human establishment, and nothing natural in right. And that is the question to which he turns now.

I wanted to discuss as a kind of introduction the passage in the Rhetoric and show that this cannot be used as evidence in Aristotle's view in this matter.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: One can say this. That Aristotle's thesis regarding the polis is based very clearly at the beginning of the Politics. The polis is natural. In the first place of course, this is not merely convention. That is clear. But there is another implication which is also not unimportant -- the polis is not sacred, or its sacredness must be understood in subordination to its naturalness. Therefore, the whole sphere of the sacred things is subordinated to the polis; that is simply one political office, if you can call it a political office, and that is the priesthood. Does not it say that the gods of the polis are really relative to the polis. If we want to discover the true gods, we must go beyond the gods of the polis.

So shall we then turn to the short chapter on natural right.

Reader: "Political justice is of two kinds, one natural, and the other conventional."

Strauss: One can also say legal.

Reader: "Justice is natural that has the same power everywhere, and does not depend on being accepted or not. Justice is conventional, that is the beginning may be settled in one way or the other, though having once been settled, it is not indifferent."

Strauss: The simplest example is left or right driving. There is no superiority of one to the other. But once it is settled, it does make all the difference. In other words, you have to obey it. There are things which do not depend in any way on how it seems; that was the formula for the establishment of a law, (inaudible), it pleased, the demos, it seemed to the demos. For the positive law

and for the legal right, opinion-deeming decision is decisive. Nothing of this kind enters natural right.

This point is of course the first step in any exposition of what natural right means, and has therefore been repeated very frequently.

Student: (Inaudible).

Strauss: Well, I have not sufficiently investigated whether there is some peculiarity of the British or of the climate of Britain which makes it desirable to have left driving. All right, but (inaudible) arbitrary but indispensable decision.

But the question is, something which has everywhere the same force, that alone is natural. And of course the question would be to find something which has everywhere the same force. And Aristotle will tell us about that. Now let us go on.

Reader: "For example, that the ransom for a prisoner shall be a mina, that a sacrifice shall consist of a goat and not of two sheep, and any regulations enacted for particular cases, for example, the sacrifice in honor of Brasidas, and ordinances in the nature of special decrees."

Strauss: Now these are all examples of positive laws. Does this give us any guidance toward natural right?

Student: These are all unnatural things.

Strauss: But if something natural is hidden in them, how do we get at it? Since the natural is the same everywhere -- you must abstract from the particular, you must generalize, and perhaps we arrive then at natural right.

Student: Well, perhaps everywhere prisoners are ransomed, but it is arbitrary for how much and everywhere sacrifices are made, but it is arbitrary what.

Strauss: But is there a ransoming of prisoners everywhere?

Student: War.

Strauss: That would lead to the consequence that war is an institution of natural law, and I believe that is a traditional teaching, but it would of course lead to grave questions regarding just and unjust.

Student: Having made an arbitrary decision, the tendency is no matter what the arbitrary decision is, to obey the decision, and conforming to it, and understanding that non-conformity would be an unjust action.

Strauss: After all, you could say that the ransom could be two minae instead of one. Now what are the prisoners? We assume that they are citizens of course and that they have come into

misfortune which they could not have foreseen and into which they fell perhaps being in the service of the city. Now if we generalize accordingly, the polis is responsible for citizens who have come into trouble in their service to the city, which makes sense as what is a proposition everywhere just, good. And even if you could say well there are people who don't do that, this is a kind of disrespect on just people, that they do not recognize their obligation.

Student: I don't understand why it can't go beyond that, to the notion that people have an inherent understanding that unless certain decisions are arbitrary, driving on one side of the street or the other, paying a ransom or not, that there is a justice in obeying that decision; otherwise the political state would be chaotic.

Strauss: This I believe is in Aristotle's mind, but I would like to proceed more step by step. Now the other example -- that is a matter of positive law, whether you should sacrifice on an occasion a goat or two sheep, but that you should sacrifice, that you should worship the gods; that is everywhere valid. Simply if you say one of these is one special form of this. So then we would have some inkling from these examples. But let us go on.

Reader: "Some people think that all just things are conventional. Because whereas a thing by nature is unchangeable, with the same power everywhere, as fire burns both here and in Persia, just things are seen to differ."

Strauss: This we already seen in the first book near the beginning. That there were people who said even all noble things are conventional and also the good things are not simply good. You remember that. Here he speaks specifically about the just things, because the just things are all in motion. Constant changes not only in the positive law -- that is for granted, but even in what people consider intrinsically just. More than that, even what is intrinsically just, is in motion.

Student: Just a question -- supposing I went up and asked Aristotle, take for example the notion of fairness. Now everybody has a notion of fairness; material application may differ from person to person and from community to community, but it is a standard.

Strauss: Aristotle knows that, and his analysis of commutative and distributive justice has even tried to spell out what we mean when we speak of fairness. In some cases it means simple equality -- in the case of commutative justice, and in the case of distributive justice it means proportional equality. He has made this clear, but let us see how he pursues his argument. It would have been so very easy for him to say, as we have said before, the principles of commutative and distributive justice are unchangeable, but let us see what he says.

Reader: "This is not so, but it is true in a way. Among the gods indeed it is perhaps not true at all, but in our world, although there is such a thing by nature, all is changeable. But nevertheless there is something by nature just."

Strauss: And the other . . .

Reader: ". . .as well as not (inaudible)."

Strauss: Now here we have this remark. Thomas Aquinas has explained this chapter along the following terms. The highest principles of natural law are unchangeable, and for practical purposes that means the second table of the Ten Commandments. But when you go down to more specific cases, then natural right becomes changeable. But Aristotle doesn't make the distinction between the unchangeable principles and the changeable consequences. He says all right, both natural and positive, is changeable.

Student: If everything is changeable, doesn't this in some way qualify the earlier statement in Book VI in which he said justice exists only because relationships which are regulated by law . . .

Strauss: No, justice par excellence. He doesn't say that this justice exists only among fellow citizens. In the fullest sense it exists only . . .

Student: But I mean to say that the highest incidence of justice, or that just act which is naturally just, is in some way antithetical to law which is everywhere not changeable or incommutable, and it seems a really significant confrontation here between law -- which I assume to remain law, it couldn't be everywhere commutable, but would have to be immutable, like . . .

Strauss: The question is of what do we have to think when we hear Aristotle speak of natural right. Do we have to think of the second table of the (inaudible), or do we have to think of such examples that are possibly implied in his examples here, ransom of prisoners and sacrificing to the gods. Now I would say this, that sacrificing to the gods, or more generally, worshipping the gods, is everywhere just. One could say this is not changeable, and it seems to say that it is changeable.

Student: I'm not specifically referring to Aquinas' example here.

Strauss: To Aristotle, you mean.

Student: You brought in Aquinas.

Strauss: I returned to Aristotle . . .

Student: I'm just asking, if justice is everywhere commutable, how it can at the same time be in some sense equivalent to law?

Strauss: Oh I see now what you mean. It is not equivalent to law. I mean it is no accident that Aristotle speaks of the natural right, and what is by nature right and what is right by law. The natural right has nothing to do with law. In a more popular formulation of the Rhetoric, he speaks of the cosmos nomos, of the common or universal law, but not here, where he speaks of right. And on reason I believe is that he wants to keep away altogether the notion of law. Something could be right without having the form of law. When you speak of law, you presuppose a lawgiver. Who would be the lawgiver of natural law? It could only be the gods, and of the gods Aristotle says somewhere they rule not by issue of commands. So there is no place for natural law, but natural right there could be, because certain relations, certain proportions, certain harmonies, could be intrinsically right, like that of the just price or just wages or what have you, without any lawgiver. We are concerned only with natural right, not with natural law.

Student: But at the same time, when he is referring to a law of nature, and then points out . . .

Strauss: One very simple thing -- you cannot hold Aristotle responsible for what the translator does. It is only a question of right, and that is not merely a semantic distinction, but a distinction of divine legislation, and that does not exist for Aristotle, but the question could very well be of natural right, and we assert that there is a natural right, and we must try to find out what it is. It has everywhere the same force but it is changeable.

Now if we take the simple example, that of (inaudible) the gods, how could this be changeable? One could say that up to a certain point one goat, and then a change to two sheep, but this one could rightly say is not a change of the principle, but only a change of the determination of the universal law by the human legislator. But the true change would be simply not to sacrifice. How could this be? Well, there could be time of famine or some other thing, so in other words there is no human right which is not changeable, because of the changeability of the human situation.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is a hypothetical argument to which we find no reference here. The key point is simply that what is in itself just, to worship the gods, and the same would also be true of the ransom of prisoners. It might be in a given case more damaging to the polis than not ransoming. There are all kinds of people who have become captives and all kinds of enemies, and there is a great variety of circumstances. Therefore, there is nothing which we can say is universally valid. Even if we take the case of a much more fundamentally thing and much more important, in our eyes than the two examples alluded to by Aristotle, the prohibition against murder -- there is a classic case of the two men on a shipwreck -- only one man can survive, and the stronger

one pushes the weaker one or the luckier one pushes the unluckier one from the wreck. It is clear murder. There are attenuating circumstances, but still . . . can we say he acted unjustly? Can we say that? If one is the father and one is the son, and the father might solve the problem by saying well, you still have your life in front of you and I am old and he commits suicide, and this can also be thought conceivably to be an unjust act. Is it better that they die both or that one is saved? These are hard questions. At any rate we come sooner or later, and let us hope later, to a sphere of half-darkness where the clear distinction between right and wrong which we can draw in normal times, in normal circumstances, cannot be true. That would be a confirmation of what Aristotle says, that all right is changeable.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This is meant to be a practical book from cover to cover, so merely practical would not be an objection. What other considerations can there be to practical matters?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But you would not call a man who does not worship the gods because he is very gravely ill an unjust man from any point of view. That is a different case.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But they would no longer believe in natural justice on this ground. They would not dispose of the fact that natural justice remains such. I mean let us say if natural justice is unchangeable, -- is changeable, it means that in all these cases the distinction between justice and injustice remains in full force and only its content changes from normal circumstances to extreme emergency situations.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: What would that be? If we used a more general expression? Justice after all is a human virtue, as Aristotle speaks of it. Can you not say the nature of man is that unchangeable? Which remains in all the changes? And to that extent the Athenians from the time of the Plague and the Athenians in other circumstances were all human beings and within the limits of man's nature?

As to the one of you who said self-preservation . . . I would say this, that this would seem to show how wise Hobbes was, who said self-preservation is the key to all justice. It wouldn't make it Aristotelian -- on the contrary it would be a good starting point for understanding Hobbes.

Student: (Inaudible.)

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Strauss: Take a specific political context. Some extremely dangerous mission -- whom do you send? You send a man (inaudible), and that's also part of this question.

In brief, I think the example of the two shipwrecked men would show that Aristotle believed that there is no statement on universal right which is universally valid, which is unchangeable, makes sense. One cannot anticipate the situations, situations which may be caused by a particularly beastly enemy. Of course you can say we will not use these methods because we would then ourselves become utterly barbarized, but there are limits to that, how far you can go there. Because the members of the polis have a natural interest in their living on as a polis, for they must make concessions to the vicious enemy. I think you see it every day in foreign affairs particularly, how the more unjust and the more wicked dictates in a way.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: They are intrinsically unjust, but they presuppose a certain normality of situation. They are also changeable. Think of a man who is very liberal hereto, a model of liberality, and then he loses all his fortune, without any fault of his. His liberality looks very different after his failure than before.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Two beggars -- one of them can be liberal, and the other is illiberal. Of course that is not noticeable to the unarmed eye, so to speak. The normal liberal cannot be a beggar. But still, there is a very great changeability there. There are certain things which can be said, as Aristotle says. He is trying to say these in the Ethics, but they are all subject to qualification. Aristotle had spoken in the first book about the peculiar character of the kind of knowledge which he sets forth in this book. You remember he spoke three times of that, of the great perplexity and confusion in these things. But not so great that one can say this is all merely convention, as they would say today, merely culture-bound, culture A dictates this, and culture B dictates that. It doesn't make any difference. No, lines are discernible, but it is impossible that these things should be unchangeable. The distinction between justice and injustice, between a good and evil man, remains, but what he will do and how he will act will differ.

Student: Could I return to the situation of the two men on the shipwreck? Were you trying to say that in that situation, according to Aristotle, it could be called just for the one man to push the other man off, or would you say that it is a situation in which the consideration of justice is irrelevant to what they do?

Strauss: Aristotle I believe would say it is not unjust. This is not quite the same as to say it is just.

Student: Unless you say it's just, then it seems that you can't say what he thinks, that the natural . . .

Strauss: He doesn't give that example . . .

Student: . . . because in that situation it seems that the naturally just doesn't really have any force, because no matter what you think about it, it doesn't really tell you . . .

Strauss: But you must remember that the case of the two men on the plank is an exception, and in most cases fortunately, normality prevails. You only have to think of what happens in the case of a plague or war or so on, how many people who were tolerably decent cease to be tolerably decent in such a situation. This of course is not what Aristotle means, but only to see that the change is radical that is brought about by the transition from a normal situation. And think only of what kind of things become (inaudible), to put it this way, when done against a beastly government. If one wants to have the other view, the 100% moral view, then one also has to go to the length of this argument and say that (inaudible) resistance against the government, rebellion against the government, is under all circumstances an unjust action. Kant is surely consistent here, and things become very simple then. The argument is characteristic -- no revolution without previous conspiracy, and no conspiracy without lying. Because the cop at the corner might ask you where are you going now, and if you would say truthfully that now we go to a conspiratorial session, that would be very moral, but of course incompatible with your goal. Therefore, no revolution without lying, and lying is under all circumstances immoral. But Aristotle would not go so far. He would preserve a certain flexibility without which human life altogether is not possible, and this has indeed these great consequences.

Student: Is the relationship between the philosopher and the city a normal or abnormal situation?

Strauss: I believe for Aristotle it is rather abnormal. Because when he speaks of the parts of the polis in the Politics, he does not mention the philosopher. But surely one can say that is a rather one-sided statement. One can show without too great a difficulty that the polis needs the philosophers. Aristotle could never have written his Politics if he had not believed that.

Student: Previously you dismissed the examples of the Rhetoric as belonging to a particular circumstance, the argument given for acquittal in front of a law court. Now in terms of this new interpretation you have given, it begins to make a little better sense.

Strauss: I'm sorry, because if we take the (inaudible) example, it is because universal law, natural law, forbids the eating of

animals, i.e., only vegetarianism is in accordance with natural right. Aristotle rejects that.

Student: Is that the example?

Strauss: That's one of the things.

Student: The eating of animals.

Strauss: Yes. So these examples which we can (inaudible) from this passage make sense, namely that the city has an obligation to help those citizens who have come into misfortune by serving the city. Does it not make sense?

Student: Yes, but I can't understand the third example, even with the example given in the Ethics that the man who is like his god is as extraordinary as the slave . . . (inaudible . . .).

Strauss: Yes, I think that's the purpose why he speaks of that in the Rhetoric. I see our time is up. We will continue with this next time. I'm inclined to believe that an important ingredient of what Aristotle had in mind about natural right was brought out in a medieval tradition, rather Islamic and Jewish than Christian, according to which natural right comprises the evident minimum conditions of the polis. Therefore, every polis must fulfill them with the qualifications as stated. And therefore, from this point of view, positive law would be something higher than natural right, because it is more than the minimum conditions, but whether this is a feasible thought, we must see.

Lecture XXII
Aristotle's Ethics, May 20, 1968

Strauss: But what happens to political philosophy in Kant? As distinguished from his present-day successors? It might be worth considering for a moment to see how much has changed and how rapidly things have changed in the last 100 years. Well, for Kant political philosophy is absolutely indispensable, but it is in no way an arbitrary method depending upon arbitrary value judgments of himself as an individual, whether his ethics is sound or deep is another matter, but for him it is clear that there are principles of reference which are in no way arbitrary and which are universally valid.

(Professor Strauss is referring to a number of student papers here.)

And now let us return after such a long interruption to the fifth book of the Ethics. Now let us remind ourselves of the more general things. Aristotle's inquiry in this book as we have said in the beginning is a kind of political inquiry. It deals with the foundations of politics but also with the limitations of politics. And therefore it contains an intimation of what transcends politics. Therefore, it is no longer properly and strictly political. To the extent that the Ethics is simply a political book, Book V is its most important part, the peak, because its subject is justice, and justice as we have learned is the whole of virtue directed toward another human being, toward a neighbor, we could say. And virtue in this relation to a neighbor is higher than the virtue understood only as a perfection of the individual.

There is this difficulty -- towards the other, towards the neighbor, and this is also another aspect, an aspect which Aristotle deals with when speaking of particular justice. You remember the passage at the end of Book IV, and it won't do us any harm if we read it again. 1128b, 21.

Reader: "For indeed the virtuous man does not feel shamed, for shame is the feeling caused by base actions. Since one ought not to do base actions, the distinction between acts really shameful and those reputed to be so is immaterial, since one ought not to do either, and so one never ought to feel shamed. Shame is a mark of a base man, and springs from a character capable of doing a shameful act, and it is absurd that because a man is of such a nature that he is ashamed if he does a shameful act, he should therefore think himself virtuous, since actions to cause shame must be voluntary, but a virtuous man never voluntarily does a base action."

Strauss: Now this was as it were the crime finale of the previous discussion, and the tacit transition to the discussion of justice in Book V, because now we hear something very different. Turn to 1131b, 32 following.

Reader: "But the just and private transactions, although it is the equal in a sense, and the unjust the unequal, is not the equal according to geometrical but according to arithmetical proportions. For it makes no difference whether a good man has defrauded a bad man or a bad one a good one, nor whether it is a good or a bad man that has committed adultery."

Strauss: And so on. A good man here is the same as that used at the end of Book IV, 1134a,17.

Reader: "But seeing that a man may commit injustice without actually being unjust, what is it that distinguishes those unjust acts, the commission of which renders a man actually unjust under one of the various forms of injustice? For example, a thief or an adulterer or a brigand, or shall we rather say that the distinction does not lie in the quality of the act, for a man may have intercourse with a woman, knowing who she is, yet not from the motive of deliberate choice, but under the influence of passion. In such a case, though he has committed injustice, he is not an unjust man. For instance, he is not a thief, though guilty of theft, and not an adulterer, though he has committed adultery, and so forth."

Strauss: So here Aristotle draws a very important different conclusion from the fact that justice is toward the other. The first conclusion was that justice is toward the other and therefore more difficult than the other virtues and therefore higher. Now justice is toward the other and therefore more external than the other virtues. So that the difference which otherwise would be very important between the noble and the base character becomes unimportant if we consider only it in itself. Is it a crime or not criminal? Naturally this must be properly understood. In one sense justice is external, but true justice, full justice, is not merely external, as is indicated by this very question. A man who is a just man or merely a man acting justly will obey the law in the right spirit. Now Aristotle proceeds from here generally in the following manner.

He has established the fact that an unjust man and a transgressor as we might perhaps then say -- in Greek the two words are very close, , unjust, the man who acts unjustly. So this distinction is clear. In order to clarify it, we must know what is the unjust man, and therefore who is the just man, i.e., who is the just man par excellence? The just man simply, and that is the same as the man who is just in the political sense.

And then in a passage which we read last time -- 1134a, 30, and would you read this?

Reader: "For justice can only exist between those whose mutual relations are regulated by law."

Strauss: So the sphere of the politically just is identical with the sphere of the *nomos*, of the law. This might lead us to think that everything just is so through *nomos* -- nothing just is just by nature. This subject is taken up by Aristotle in the immediate verse where we were interrupted last time. We discussed briefly the section in the Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter 13, and I do not have to repeat that, and we turn now immediately to the next chapter where we left off.

We begin at 1134b, 24 -- only one word of summary -- what is by nature just, Aristotle says has everywhere the same force. In Greece as well as in Persia. He says everywhere where we would say always. And this shows an interesting difference between our way of looking at things and the Greek way of looking at things. Our way of looking at things is much more historical -- we are much more impressed by the historical change. For the Greeks the simultaneous differences, the co-existing differences, are more impressive, and the reason being is that you can know this by your own observation, by your own travelling. By travelling from here to Mexico, you see different customs, but by difference between an older culture and today's culture this you can only do through hearsay.

So the natural just has everywhere this same force. And it has this force not going to human fiat, whereas positive law has this force going to human fiat. Now examples seem to be worshipping the gods and similar matters, more generally stated, the fundamental requirements of any political life, anywhere on earth.

But, and now Aristotle makes this surprising remark, though there is something which is just intrinsically and independent of human fiat, everything just, natural or conventional, is changeable. Now let us read on in b,24.

Reader: "Some people think that all just things are conventional, whereas a thing by nature is immutable and has the same power everywhere, as fire burns both here and in Persia, just things are seen to differ."

Strauss: Seem to change, to undergo change.

Reader: "This is not so, but it is true in a way. Among the gods, indeed, it is perhaps not true at all, but in our world, although there is such a thing by nature . . ."

Strauss: Meaning something just by nature . . .

Reader: ". . . all is changeable. But nevertheless there is something by nature just, as well as not ordained by nature. And it is clear which sort of justice, though not absolute, is natural, and which is not natural but conventional by agreement. Both sorts are alike being changeable."

Strauss: Now is this clear, as Aristotle so quietly asserts. Perhaps not quite. Perhaps we can say this much, that between the natural and the conventionally just lies not unchangeability on the one side and the changeability on the other. This Aristotle has abandoned. But in the independence of human fiat in the one case, and the dependence on human fiat on the other. This I think we can safely say. Do you have some troubles?

Student: Yes, I do not understand that word.

Strauss: Fiat? Do you say fee-at? I try to make a concession to English, but I never know which concessions are demanded and which not. So I think Aristotle means perhaps the passage is truly clear. Now go on.

Reader: "The same distinction will hold good in all other matters. For example, the right hand is by nature stronger than the left, yet it is possible for any man to make himself ambidextrous."

Strauss: Whether this is meant to be a strict parallel or only some loose illustration is hard to say. The right hand is by nature stronger than the left. This is directed against the thesis of Plato in the Laws, 794d following. Plato asserts that the right hand is not by nature stronger, that it is merely a habit, and Plato in the Republic says that the difference between men and women is not so important as people say, criticizing habit there too, and Aristotle regarding habit as much more natural -- the universal habit as much more natural. But the right hand is by nature stronger, and yet men may make themselves ambidextrous. Now what does this mean? If we apply it to the question here discussed. Then it would mean ambidexterity corresponds to the legal justice as distinguished from natural justice. Should this mean that the legal justice is a deteriorating addition to what is by nature just? This seems to be impossible because why should we make a deteriorating addition, which is good enough in itself. Maybe the legal right or legal justice is an improving supplement of the natural right.

In this case natural and positive right together, corresponding to ambidexterity, would be higher than natural right corresponding to natural right-handedness.

Now let us then continue with this chapter.

Reader: "The justice based upon agreement and expediency is like standard measures. Corn and wine-makers are not equal in all places, but are larger in wholesale and smaller in retail markets. Similarly, the justice ordained not by nature but by man is not the same in all places because regimes are not the same. Though in all places there is only one regime that is natural."

Strauss: That is according to nature the best. So first of all Aristotle says that the conventional human right things are according to convenience, and therefore there are no intrinsic principles of right involved. An example he gives is clear enough. But this does

not mean that human right, the right established by man, that these things are altogether conventional, for laws depend on regime, democratic laws differ from oligarchic laws. Now the difference of regimes in its turn points to the best regime, and the best regime is everywhere nature the best. Aristotle does not go here into the question whether in the best regime there would be any laws and not perhaps the one superior rule of one man. He doesn't open that.

The point which he is eager to make is that there is a kind of ceiling higher than all positive laws and this ceiling is natural. One could say perhaps, with a view to the point I made last time, that there is a flooring which is natural, the minimum conditions of civilized life, and a ceiling which is natural, and in this ceiling there is a great variety of partly reasonables and partly unreasonable. You see Aristotle doesn't say of the best regimes that it is everywhere just -- he says it is everywhere best. That makes a great difference.

The authentic commentary on this passage you will find at the end of Book III of the Politics where Aristotle indicates which kind of regime is by nature best for which kind of society. For these different kinds of societies, different regimes are just. But it is possible to raise the question, which of these regimes is equally just in its place or time is proved to be preferable, from the point of view of human excellence.

One can say that this is the difference between Aristotle and doctrinaire doctrines. The doctrinaire political doctrine is the one which asserts that there is one and only one regime which is just everywhere or at all times. Aristotle would of course deny that. But this does not lead to the consequence of simple relativism because while justice is of great variety in this respect, bestness or goodness is not.

We have not taken up a question which must have been present to more than one of you. Aristotle has spoken in this chapter so briefly and critically on natural law, shortly after he had discussed commutative and distributive justice. What is the relation of the principles of commutative and distributive justice to natural right? Are these principles not natural right? What else should be natural right if not these principles? There is no specific reference to that, because Aristotle takes it for granted that we would put two and two together. I hope he is not disappointed.

But even if it is so, that the principles of commutative and distributive justice as such are principles of natural right, they still would be changeable, according to the explicit statement made in the chapter just read, for the reason that there are situations in which it is simply not feasible to do what is intrinsically right because of emergencies of one kind or another.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is very hard to say. Thomas Hobbes solved the difficulty by making a distinction between the principles of natural right, the highest principles, which are unchangeable, and the secondary, or conclusions, or determinations, which are changeable. This distinction is not contradicted by Aristotle, but it does not have its basis in Aristotle. Now the (inaudible) doctrine accepts the changeability of all natural right. The clearest statement in the Western tradition is probably that of Marsilius of Padua in the Defender of the Peace. I quote from memory. What Marsilius says is this. There are certain principles universally accepted by all societies, and divine worship is one of these, and they are however not rational principles properly speaking, but generally accepted. This is I think the Averroistic view. This is not natural right because natural right proper would be rational right, and so Marsilio's (inaudible) is about this -- what is rational is not universally accepted, and what is universally accepted is not rational. Wherefore he turns this against the Thomastic notion of natural law.

Another Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I spoke of a flooring beneath which you would not find any political life, and a ceiling beyond which political life cannot possibly go, and even perhaps more precisely, this ceiling is already beyond politics proper, so that all politics moves between these two limits, and has a standard of its excellence or opposite in the best regime and can be judged accordingly.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the question is whether there is not a dialectic in politics which leads beyond politics, so that that what politics is after cannot be fulfilled by political means anymore. Therefore, a kind of dilution of what politics primarily intends is not essential.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Perhaps the two thoughts belong to different processes of the argument. We constantly are compelled to judge of political things, and not only of individuals or individual measures or individual laws, but of political orders as a whole. Think of the present day -- who can prevent himself from trying to form a judgment about the relative merits of democracy on the one hand and communism on the other? Or alternatives which are less striking, but have potential.

So this question of what is better points to the question of what is simply good, and that is one clear argument leading up to the question of what is the best regime. And now when you try

to elaborate that and take the most extreme view and the most radical, as Plato did in the Republic, then you arrive at these well-known conclusions which seems to be the perfect regime, but of which one can rightly wonder, not only from Aristotle's point of view, but from Plato's own point of view, is this still a polis? Now then one must say well, all right, let us then correct the mistake and let us not abstract from them anything which Plato abstracts in the Republic, and write of something like the best regime of Plato's Laws, or for that matter the best regime of Aristotle's Politics, Books -- 7, and 8., which are not so enormously different from each other. This you can do. whether this is sufficient -- the difference however small between the best regime of the Laws and the best regime of Books 7 and 8 of the Politics does not lead to a further questioning of this whole notion of the best regime. That is a long question. The prima facie reasonableness of the question cannot be denied. It is in a way borne out practically by the fact that most people concerned with politics have definite views of what is the best regime. Liberals and conservatives differ greatly, but they each have an overall view of what the best interpretation of the American Constitution is.

Now we have to raise a further question after having read the section on natural right. What is the meaning of the discussion of natural right in our context. Now the context is this. We are trying to understand the difference between the unjust man and the transgressor. You can compare it if you want to with the difference between a mortal and a venial sinner.

Let us assume that it belongs to the natural right to worship the gods, while sacrificing one goat or two sheep belongs to the human or conventional right. Now a man who sacrifices two sheep although it is now the law to sacrifice a single goat (inaudible) the transgressor. A man who sacrifices one sheep when it is the law to sacrifice two sheep is also the transgressor, although not an unjust man, because he has observed the principle of worship of the gods, but assuming that he doesn't sacrifice anything, would he then become an unjust man? That is a hard question. We do not have sufficient evidence to decide this case.

We have to take a somewhat broader approach if we try to understand this section here, what we read and what we are going to read, because there are many unclear transitions.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is intelligible what you have espoused, but we are trying to understand Aristotle, and Aristotle does not agree with you there. But I do not know. The passage is too brief. We have to use our own knowledge of literature or may be of life in order to see what Aristotle is thinking about. If someone is

suddenly overcome by a passion for another man's wife, and seduces here, because it is not a matter of rape, that is an extreme case. But there are all kinds of inbetween cases.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But we have to go into some details in order to see that it is not so simple. Let us assume that the woman in question is the wife of a friend. The friend is in another part of the planet. She needs badly his help, and it is a business matter which must be discussed privately, in utmost secrecy. Things may develop . . . I mean I do not wish to condemn anyone (inaudible . . .). All kinds of situations are thinkable. We have to take them into consideration.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Think of the circumstance I described -- a loyal friend and everything else. And can you say then he has ceased to be an honest man? You take a great responsibility in making that judgment.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is exactly what Aristotle says. Or if this example is too elegant, take the example of the man who has stolen and is not a thief. Now if you take it very literally and the present-day meaning of the word stealing, you say a man who steals is of course a thief. Now if Phidius took this money, this gold, for another purpose than the purpose for which it was assigned, by the Athenian assembly, he may have committed an illegal act. He has to pay it back and maybe go to jail. Is he a thief? That is the question.

The problem raised by Aristotle cannot be avoided, and that is of course also underlying in a very general way what he says about natural right, that it is changeable because of the enormous changeability in human conditions. For Aristotle that doesn't do away with the moral distinctions as such. To the contrary. His whole characteristic presupposes that there are very firm principles in the light of which (inaudible).

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I suppose he would have to know the circumstances in the greatest possible detail before he could judge. But there are borderline cases where even the individuals immediately concerned cannot possibly know where the line was transgressed.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: As I said on a former occasion, it is all practical.

Strauss: Now in order to facilitate the understanding of the sequel and partly retroactively of what we have read before, we have to consider for a moment again the overall context and that is this question. The difference between the unjust man and the transgressor, or occasional transgressor. This has something to do with the externality of justice. In the case of commutative and punitive justice, we abstract altogether from the character of the doer, as Aristotle says. Not necessarily in reaching judgment on him -- that may be very important -- did he do it or did he not? -- but the question is could he have done it or not? And then of course (inaudible) would come out, but this is not the question now with which we are concerned. If we know he has done it, regardless of whether we knew previously he was a nice man or a non-nice man, he will be punished in the same way.

One may act justly in an unjust spirit. For example, one may do the right thing merely from fear of punishment, and one may act unjustly in a just spirit, as this man with whom you find fault did, because he did not have the bad intention.

Furthermore, a point which Aristotle will make in the sequel and which is also connected, with the peculiar problem of justice, the principle known from Roman law -- no injustice is done to him who agrees, who wills. Now this seems to threaten the objectivity of justice. A certain bad action is committed. Then the action to whom it is done has agreed to it, and therefore has it ceased to be a bad action. We come to that very soon.

Now one can perhaps find parallels to this in the case of the other virtues as well. Still, to say the least, this kind of discussion is given by Aristotle only in Book V and only in the discussion of justice. So it must be presumed that there is a particularly close connection within these difficulties and justice. Now it is very easy to say that Aristotle is speaking here about legal questions, because then the question arises what is law? Then it would have to become merely tetical. The sphere in which the distinction between the external acts and the intentions is of such special importance, as is not the case in the other virtues. That won't happen.

So we have to go back to the main subject, justice. What is justice? And then we get the answer, as we have to see from the beginning of this book, the virtue toward the other. Now let us first turn to Book X, 1177a, 27. Aristotle is speaking here about the difference between the two kinds of happiness and ways of life, the theoretical and the practical.

Reader: "Also, the activity of contemplation will be found to be the best and the highest degree, the quality that is termed self-sufficiency. For while it is true that the wise man equally with the just and the rest requires the necessities of life. Yet these being adequately supplied, whereas the just man needs other persons toward whom he may act justly, and so likewise do the

temperate man and the brave man and the others. The wise man on the contrary can also contemplate by himself, and the more so, the wiser he is. No doubt he will study better with the aid of fellow workers, but still he is the most self-sufficient of men."

Strauss: So you see Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of men, one of whom he calls the wise, wise not in the sense of practically wise, but theoretically wise, and the other he calls on the first occasion the just man, where he means also the brave and the others. The just man is not self-sufficient. The just man lives essentially with a view to others. Needless to say that this has nothing to do with the notion of other-directed, which is now in vogue. Now 1178a, 2-4.

Reader: "It may even be held that this is the true self of each, inasmuch as it is the dominant and better part, and therefore it would be a strange thing if a man should choose not to live his own life, but some other than himself."

Strauss: So the true thought is a self engaged in contemplation. The moral man as moral man has chosen not his own life but the life of somebody else. Two more short passages -- a little bit later, at the beginning of the next paragraph.

Reader: "The life of moral virtue, on the other hand, is happy only to a secondary degree, for the moral activities are purely human, justice I mean, courage, and the other virtues we display in our intercourse with others."

Strauss: We do these actions toward one another. And finally, b, 3-7.

Reader: "But the theoretical man, so far as the pursuit of his activity is concerned, needs no external apparatus. On the contrary, worldly goods may said to almost be a hindrance to contemplation. Though it is true that being a man and living in the society of others, he chooses to engage in virtuous actions and so will need external goods to carry on his life as a human being."

Strauss: So justice, we see now here from this general remark at the end of the book, the thought that justice is toward the other, is not limited to justice. Justice reveals the fundamental character of moral virtue in general as being directed towards the other human beings. All moral virtue is social in a way in which theoretical virtue is not social.

And we understand perhaps from here the strange feature of the discussion of courage in Book III, when Aristotle is presenting the truly courageous man as someone who is exposing his life, but we do not know exactly for what, but he is surely distinguished from the citizen as citizen. Aristotle as it were conceals pro-

visionally the social character of moral virtue in order to bring it out with all the greater force at the end of the book.

Now what Aristotle suggests in brief is this. The difficulties of Book V of the Ethics and to some extent also of the other books, prepare in a way, and in a way that is not always lucid, the final demotion of moral virtue, at the end of the Ethics. We would have to link up the specific discussions with which we are now concerned about the voluntariness or involuntariness of crime, for example, with this fundamental issue.

Now let us continue where we left off, 1135a, 6, I believe. We have just completed the discussion of natural right.

Reader: "Each of the just and lawful things are related to the actions conforming with them as universals to particulars. The actions done are many, while each law is one, being universal."

Strauss: Why does he say that here? In the sequel he has not included this. Why does he make this remark here? All just and lawful things, meaning regardless of whether they are by nature just, or by convention just, have the character of universality, commanding, forbidding, universally. We could have understood the relation of natural law and positive right as that of universal to the more particular, the natural law being the universal, and the positive law as the particular. I believe that this question is somehow present. Aristotle says not more indeed than just this -- universality applies to all law regardless of whether it is natural or positive.

Reader: "There is a difference between that which is unjust and unjust conduct, between that which is just and just conduct. Nature, or ordinance, pronounces a thing unjust. When that thing is done, it is unjust conduct. Until it is done it is only unjust, and similarly with just conduct, dikaion, or more generally, the (inaudible) is (inaudible), dikaion denoting the rectification of an act of injustice. We shall consider later several rules of justice and of law and to enumerate their various kinds and describe them and the things of which they deal."

Strauss: Now here Aristotle gives an indication of the difference between the unjust man and the transgressor. Their difference does not lie in that between natural right and conventional right, as it could have seemed on the basis of earlier remarks. But the injustice resides in the intention, in the will, as distinguished from the external action. How did he put it here? "After it was done, it was an unjust action. Before it was done, it was not an unjust action, but only something unjust." We do not have the same terminology, and Aristotle has to (inaudible), as you see from this occasional remark here.

Reader: "Such being an account of just and unjust actions, it is their voluntary performance that constitutes just and unjust conduct. If a man does them involuntarily, he cannot be said to

act justly or unjustly, except (inaudible), in the sense that he does an act which happens to be just or unjust. Whether an action is or is not an action of injustice or justice depends on its involuntary or voluntary character. When it is voluntary, the agent is blamed, and only in that case is the action an act of injustice, so that it is possible for an act to be unjust without being an act of injustice if the qualification of voluntariness be absent."

Strauss: So the man who acts unjustly, the transgressor, must be voluntary. Needless to say that the same is true also of the unjust man, but even in the case of the transgressor, one can (inaudible). But Aristotle seems to say there may be sometimes unjust acts without involuntariness being involved. What does he mean by that? We will see whether the sequel will show any light on that.

Reader: "By a voluntary action, as has been said before, I mean any action within the agent's own control which he performs knowingly, that is, without being in ignorance of the person affected, the instrument employed, and the result. For example, he must know whom he strikes and with what weapon and the effect of the blow, and in each of these respects both accident and compulsion must be excluded. For example, if A took hold of B's hand and struck C, B would not be a voluntary agent since the act would not be in his own control. Or again, a man may strike his father without knowing that it is his father."

Strauss: This of course is important because father-beating is a much more serious offense.

Reader: "Though aware that he is striking some person, and perhaps that it is one or other of the persons present, and ignorance may be similarly defined with reference to the result and to the circumstances of the action generally. An involuntary act is therefore an act done in ignorance or else, one that is not done in ignorance, is not in the agent's control, or is done under compulsion. There are many natural processes too that we perform or undergo knowingly, though none of them is either voluntary or involuntary. For example, growing old and dying. Also, an act may be either just or unjust incidentally. A man may restore a deposit unwillingly and from fear of consequences. We do not then say that he does a just act or that he acts justly except incidentally. And similarly, a man who under compulsion and against his will fails to restore a deposit, may be said to act unjustly but is unjust incidentally."

Strauss: This example may help us. There may be sometimes unjust acts without voluntariness being involved. I think here is an example. You do not return a deposit at a fixed time and therefore have to pay a particularly high interest rate. And you were prevented from returning it by some people who kept you prisoner. You clearly did not voluntarily fail to keep your promise. Nevertheless you have to suffer the penalty, which was arranged when you made the contract. This would be a case in which a man

can commit an unjust act, a punishable act, without any voluntariness.

Here is repeated the long discussions at the beginning of the book on voluntarism and involuntarism.

Reader: "Again, voluntary acts are divided into acts done by choice and those not done by choice, the former being those done after deliberation, and the latter those done without previous deliberation."

Strauss: So now Aristotle (inaudible) the somewhat higher consideration of choice or election as distinguished from mere voluntariness. The distinction -- voluntariness is something we share with the brutes whereas election is something specifically human.

Reader: "Now there are three ways in which a man may injure his fellow, an injury done in ignorance is an error, the person affected or the act or the instrument or the result being other than the agent supposed. For example, he did not think to hit, or not with this missile or not this person or not with this result. But it happened that either the result was other than he expected. For instance, he did not mean to inflict a wound but only a prick, or the person, or the missile. When then the injury happens contrary to reasonable expectation, it is a misadventure. Though not contrary to reasonable expectations, and done without evil intent, it is a culpable error. An error is culpable when the cause of one's ignorance lies in oneself, but only a misadventure when the cause lies outside oneself. When an injury is done knowingly but not deliberately, it is an act of injustice or wrong. Such, for instance, are injuries done through anger, and any other unavoidable but natural passion to which men are liable. Since in committing these injuries and errors, a man acts unjustly, his action is an act of injustice, but he is not ipso facto unjust or wicked. The injury was not done out of wickedness. When, however, an injury is done from choice, the doer is unjust and wicked. Hence, acts due to sudden anger are rightly held not to be done (inaudible), for it is the man who gave the provocation that began it, not he who does the deed in a fit of passion."

Strauss: Now that is a key practical decision. The man who kills from anger is a transgressor, but not an unjust man. I think we understand this meaning. Now he will develop this a bit more in the sequel.

Reader: "And moreover, the issue is not one of fact but of justification, since it is apparent injustice that arouses anger. The fact that the injury is not disputable, as it is in cases of contract where one or the other of the parties must be a (inaudible) unless they dispute the fact out of (inaudible). They agree after the fact but dispute on which side justice lies. So that one thinks he has been unjustly treated, and the other does not. On the other hand, one who does an injury intentionally is not acting in ignorance, but if a man does an injury of set purpose, he is

guilty of injustice, and injustice of the sort that renders the doer an unjust man, if it be an act which violates proportion or equality. Similarly, one who acts justly on purpose is a just man, but he acts justly only in the act voluntarily."

Strauss: Let us stop here for a moment. You are familiar with this question from Plato's Republic. The distinction between anger, spiritedness, on the one hand, and desire on the other is such a crucial theme. Now we see from Aristotle more clearly perhaps than from Plato's text what the solid practical basis for this fateful distinction between anger and desire was. As Plato presents it, spiritedness is higher in rank than desire, because spiritedness takes the side of reason against desire, and this is a key point. Now this is an obviously wrong reasoning as everyone of you knows when you see a child or grown-up who became angry from thwart of desire, where anger takes the side of desire against reason. It is probably more common than the other. The whole argument of the Republic is really based on this point that, while it makes sense to say that in the polis, the warrior, the fighting estate, is higher in rank than the producers and consumers, and therefore in this sense spiritedness is higher than desire. Of the individual it surely is not true, and the only proof really given is (inaudible . . .) by Zeus it is so, which as we know is not a proof.

But now what is the basis for the view that crimes committed from anger are less terrible than crimes committed from desire? Well, proceeding quite empirically, we may proceed as follows. What is the worst crime committed from anger ordinarily?

Student: Murder.

Strauss: Yes, or homicide. And the worst crime committed from desire? Rape.

Student: (Inaudible . . .) that treason is the worst crime . . .

Strauss: But is treason a crime essentially rooted in desire, and bodily desire? It could, but ordinarily not.

Student: I'm talking about treason in the sense of doing harm to those who expect good from you.

Strauss: (Inaudible . . .), but on the other hand there was also the duty toward the Republic, wasn't there? It's a complicated case, but I was thinking of certain simple cases. If someone said, I admit I killed that man, but I did it from anger, this is generally regarded as an attenuating circumstance. But if someone says I committed rape but I did it from lust, that would not be regarded as an attenuating circumstance.

Now if you ascend from this simple fact to the principles involved, you see that there is a certain case -- a case can be made for Plato and also for Aristotle, that crimes committed from anger

are to be treated more mildly than crimes committed from desire. Now we will read the end of this section.

Reader: "Of involuntary actions, some are pardonable and some are not, errors not merely committed in ignorance but caused by ignorance are pardoned. Those permitted in ignorance but caused not by the ignorance but by unnatural or inhuman passions are unpardonable. But it may perhaps be doubted whether our discussion of . . . "

Strauss: We will come to that next time. But what crimes does he have in mind? Ineffable crimes, which are in pardonable. I think at the beginning of Book VII -- you can read it at home -- 1148b, 19 following, of crimes which do not permit passion to arise at all.

But let us nevertheless read the very beginning, and see what we come up against now.

Reader: "But it may perhaps be doubted whether our discussion of suffering and doing injustice has been sufficiently definite. In the first place, whether the matter really is, as Euripides has put it in the strange line -- I killed my mother; that's the tale in brief. Were you both willing or unwilling both?"

Strauss: That is apparently another person in that lost tragedy. Meaning was he the murderer; did he willingly kill his mother? And his mother being obviously willing to be killed. Now this new difficulty is this. Does not the act of committing an unjust act or of suffering an unjust act depend on the unwillingness of the one who suffers the unjust act, so for example that matricide, ordinarily regarded as one of the most terrible crimes, is not a crime at all, if the mother urges the son to kill her. These cases happen perhaps more today, because of some of the loose notions prevailing, than in former times, where from compassion concealment.

Now if this is so, if even the most terrible crimes cease to be crimes, if they are done with the will of the sufferer, where does the famous objectivity of justice come to? That is another question which in this form was never raised regarding the other virtues, so that justice has the great problem of morality more massively than the other virtues do, and thus prepares Aristotle's finer findings, if you want to enter a sphere of perfect order and light and clarity, we must go beyond the sphere of human action.

Student: I was just curious to know if there was a difference somewhere obvious between the discussion of voluntary and involuntary actions and the discussion of voluntariness in 1135, a.

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Strauss: Surely it is a clarification, but it is also a considerable complication which he arises, and generally speaking one can

say it is an ascent from the first statement to the second statement, deeper into the problems, deeper into the entanglements, deeper into the confusion. But here Aristotle explicitly refers to the fact that he had mentioned these things before, and he refers obviously to Book III.

Lecture XXIII
Aristotle's Ethics, May 22, 1968

Now we have discussed last time the difficulty peculiar to justice. A man may be a transgressor without being unjust. We have the example which seemed to be favoured by everyone -- the gentleman who commits adultery without being an adulterer. In a great work in modern times, this subject is represented in this form, namely Faust, and Faust is presented as "a good man" who in his dark urge (and I try to translate literally) preserves his consciousness of the right way. Now what is that dark urge? And how does it show itself? Well, you know that in the first place he seduces poor Gretchen, secondly he kills Gretchen's mother -- admittedly he gave her only a tranquilizer supplied by (inaudible). That this was fatal he didn't know, but he could have known given the source. Finally he kills the brother who is enraged about the loss of honour of his sister. And nevertheless he is a good man. (Inaudible) wrote a tough criticism of Goethe's notion in one of his essays.

Aristotle did not think of a case so extreme as that of Faust. There is an example of that, and that would perhaps be Alcibiades but he never says that Alcibiades was a model of a gentleman. Or, if you wish, of a gentleman who once or twice transgressed, but otherwise was more or less perfect. This is one point.

The second related difficulty is seen in 1135b, 23, and that is someone does an unjust act, but does not do it in an unjust manner. The specific example -- a man is prevented by kidnappers from restoring the deposit in time. Now he is of course in one sense perfectly just; it was not his fault. Yet it was an unjust act is shown by the fact that he must pay the compensation due for non-payment in time. Now these and other difficulties are due to the peculiarities to justice, of justice. Justice is the virtue toward the other man. And in this there is founded the possibility of a divorce of the external action on the one hand and the intentions on the other.

Now we were at this point, but let us read the beginning again in 1136a, 10-14.

Reader: "But it may perhaps be doubted whether our discussion of suffering and doing injustice has been sufficiently definite. And in the first place whether the matter really is, as Euripides has put it in the strange line, I killed my mother; that's the tale in brief; were you both willing or unwilling both."

Strauss: Now this is a new difficulty. Does not doing injustice or suffering injustice depend on the unwillingness of the individual suffering injustice? So much so that matricide would cease to be a crime, if the mother tells her son to kill her. Now if this were unqualifiably so, the objectivity of justice would have to collapse, because any crime committed at the request of someone

who suffers from it, would cease to be a crime. Now he goes on how?

Reader: "Is it really possible to suffer injustice voluntarily, or on the contrary is suffering injustice always voluntary? Just as acting unjustly is always voluntary. And again, is suffering injustice always voluntary? Or always involuntary, or sometimes one or sometimes the other? And similarly, with being treated justly, acting justly being always voluntary. Thus it would be reasonable to suppose that both being treated unjustly and being treated justly are similarly opposed to acting justly and acting unjustly respectively. That either both are voluntary or both involuntary. But it would be paradoxical to assert that even being treated justly is always voluntary."

Strauss: The case of which he thinks here is that of punishment. This discussion is at length in Plato's (inaudible). Now if you undergo punishment, then you suffer justice. Justice is done to you. But this does not necessarily mean that you like it. It does not necessarily mean that you undergo it voluntarily. So you are acted upon justly without in any way on your part being a voluntary participant in the action.

So the question which Aristotle raises here all together is all suffering injustice involuntary; is all acting, doing injustice, voluntary. This is the question.

Reader: "For people are sometimes treated justly against their will. The fact is that the further question might be raised must a man who has had an unjust thing done to him always be said to have been treated unjustly, or does the same thing hold good of suffering and doing something unjust? One may be a party to a just act whether as its agent or its object incidentally. And the same is true of an unjust act. Doing what is unjust is not identical with acting unjustly. Nor yet is suffering what is unjust identical with being treated unjustly. And the same is true of acting and being treated justly. For it is impossible to be treated unjustly unless the other acts unjust. Or to be treated justly unless he acts justly."

Strauss: In other words, this is the solution of this difficulty. You undergo punishment justly, and you are entirely an involuntary partner in this just transaction. But Aristotle views this as accidental because the main point is of course is the punishment inflicted upon you just? Then the punisher acts justly, and it is irrelevant for the punishment whether you undergo it voluntarily or only under coercion.

Reader: "But if to act unjustly is simply to do harm to someone voluntarily, and voluntarily knowing the person affected and the manner of injury and the instrument, and it will follow both with the man of defective self-restraint inasmuch as he voluntarily harms himself and voluntarily suffers injustice, and also that it is possible for a man to act unjustly himself."

Strauss: Now Aristotle tries to clarify this from a different angle.

What is doing injustice? Answer: If it means harming somebody else voluntarily, then one may do injustice to one's self, for one may harm oneself voluntarily. Think of someone taking some poison or some drug and is this possible.

Reader: "And the possibility of this is also a debated question. Moreover, lack of self-restraint may make a person voluntarily submit to being harmed by another, which again would prove that it is possible to suffer injustice voluntarily. But perhaps this definition of acting unjustly is incorrect and we should add to the words -- to do harm knowing the person affected, the instrument and the manner, the further qualification against that person's wish."

Strauss: So this has then a greater finalism. To do injustice to a man means to harm him voluntarily against the will of the man harmed, and then the conclusion which Aristotle draws is one cannot do injustice to oneself. If one harms oneself voluntarily, then one is not forced, it is not imposed against your will, and then it is not strictly speaking injustice.

Reader: "If so, then a man can be harmed and can have an unjust thing done to him voluntarily, no one can suffer injustice voluntarily."

Strauss: Let us look back at the case of the matricide. The mother voluntarily suffers unjust things, namely that the son murders the mother. But she is not voluntarily wronged. He has no reason to complain. But say the public prosecutor, or anybody else taking the case of the law as law, he justly accuses her. She is as guilty, assuming that she is not killed, of the attempted murder as her son would be. Because she is at least an accessory before the fact.

Reader: "Because no one can wish to be harmed; even the unrestrained man does not, but acts contrary to his wish, for no one wishes a thing that he does not think to be good. The unrestrained man does what he thinks he ought not to do. One who gives away what is his own, as Homer says that Glaucus gave to Diomedes "gold and armour for bronze, a hundred head's worth for the worth of nine" -- cannot be said to suffer injustice. Forgiving rests with oneself; suffering injustice does not. There has to be another person who acts unjustly."

Strauss: So that is the end of this chapter. Now he takes up again the case of the man lacking self-control, who harms himself but does he wrong himself? Answer: no, because he does not do the harmful thing in order to harm himself, but because of the supposed good. If he takes the poison, he does not do it in order to harm himself, but perhaps in order to kill himself which in the circumstances he regards as a good. So to he who wills, no injustice is done.

The case of Glaucus and Diomedes offers no difficulty. It seems no fraud whatever was involved. If someone is satisfied with an exchange of goods, where the goods on the one side have a thousand-fold value of the goods on the other side, no one can complain.

So the objective is not important. The important point is the intention of both sides.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The action could nevertheless be unjust, and she has no reason to complain. The injustice is not done to her; there could be injustice done to the whole polis. Think of a simple case -- this is much clearer of course. Think of some harm done to a minor, with the consent of the minor, and yet this is not recognized by the laws, because the law takes the position that the minor is unable to judge. Now in the case of grown-up people, people who should be able to judge, there might be a public interest involved of which the state or the polis takes care but which excludes forever every right of the participant to complain. The mother cannot complain, but the polis can and must complain.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Under certain conditions, yes. For example, if by his incontinent actions, he disabled himself to do his military service, that would be a (inaudible), but nevertheless no harm is done to him. He does harm to the polis and is punished for that.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle is indeed very close to Plato or to Socrates in this point in particular. We won't be able to read this year the discussion in Book VII about incontinence where he takes that up in detail. Aristotle shares one principle with Socrates -- knowledge is something unbelievably strong, and that a man with his eyes open should do the wrong thing is as great a riddle for Socrates as it is for Aristotle. Only his solution is not quite as paradoxical. We understand immediately the situation as described in a famous verse of (inaudible) -- I see the better things, I approve of them, and yet I follow the worse courses. Daily examples from our own or other people's lives . . . And yet this was for Socrates and Plato and Aristotle the greatest riddle. Why? Because they sought this immense power of knowledge. Knowledge cannot be overrun in this way. There must be an obfuscation of knowledge in the first place before this can take place. So if someone has seen very clearly that he should not do this, he sees it only up to a certain point. In general, but regarding his special case now, there is obfuscation. Well, take on the form of sophistry, and then we say well, one time is no time, but at any rate an obfuscation takes place.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: The sophistry of human passion is practically ineradicable. But what has this to do with our question. That would happen in

either case. Either you assume on the non-Socratic as well as the Socratic basis that there will always be this undeniable fact that . . .

Student: Well, still you would have a stronger argument if you said, the fear of actions (inaudible), we don't have to look at the highest principles all the time . . .

Strauss: Well, we don't have to look at the highest principles. There is a simple example. Someone is not supposed to drink whiskey. A woman is in the unfortunate condition that she is given to the drinking of whiskey, let us say, and she is opposed to drink and she prays that God gives her the power not to drink whiskey, but while praying on her knees she is moving towards whiskey. So every moral doctrine has to admit that these things exist. The question is only how to interpret them. One interpretation is that people do this with their eyes open, fully open, he is perfectly clear in that she shouldn't drink that, and then passion coming from below crushes knowledge. And are there alternative views to the Socratic and the Aristotelian view -- no. The knowledge is already obfuscated when this takes place. As I say, we would have to study the section on incontinence.

To us modern people this is a very strange doctrine.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That has nothing to do with that, because one could say in a way in which Aristotle does, but one could surely not say this of Socrates and Plato. The key point is the power of knowledge. The power of knowledge is so that it cannot be overcome by anything else in man.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But the very term rationalization means that this is something which comes afterward, and the true motivations are purely passionate or emotional, and reason is a kind of servant of the passions.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: This is true, but this is not what the men ordinarily speaking of rationalization mean by that. That this is a kind of indirect proof of the fact that man is a rational animal.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Well, when we speak of knowledge, we mean knowledge of the truth. A pretended knowledge is not knowledge.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But it is notorious, from what I have heard from competent people, that a man who talks all the time about science doesn't have the slightest notion of the scientific or scholarly procedure. We know a bit about the genesis of the so-called totalitarian regimes in the 19th and 20th century, but there is nowhere an inference of Plato and Aristotle. Perhaps some professors as an afterthought referred to Plato and Aristotle, . . . But the mere fact that these were demagogues, shouting, violent demagogues, (inaudible), was a perfectly sufficient reason for having nothing but contempt for these. The only excuse which such people like (inaudible) have is this, that Plato (if he wrote the 7th letter, which I believe) (inaudible), when he was about twenty, some of his friends at that time made the revolution let us say of the 30 tyrants to restore virtue and justice in Athens, and then they behaved in an absolutely bestial manner, so much so that in retrospect the old democracy appeared to be the golden age. Now all right, so Plato was tempted for a moment when he was 20 -- he had 60 long years to repent that unfair and totally irresponsible (inaudible) of a moment in the life of a young boy.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Of whom? Well, he wanted to help the Syracusans, and in order to do that, he tried to civilize Dionysius of Syracuse. He was after all a friend of Dion, the man who was the enemy of Dionysius. To say nothing of the fact that even a tyrant -- a word which covers a great variety of phenomenon -- is not the same as a führer.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: He was a legitimate king, after all, but you know what Aristotle thought about it. Aristotle was prepared to educate him but he disapproved of his politics, and Aristotle is bla-med by people like (inaudible) because he did not approve of Alexanders' integrationist policy.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: As long as the knowledge is there, the knowledge cannot be (inaudible). The knowledge can give way, for example, a man may die.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: So that even the ready recollection of what he once knew has vanished; this is clear. But the point is that once he is no longer (inaudible), then you cannot possibly say that his mind was overcome by passion. There was no longer a mind to overcome. The problem of a phenomenon to be explained or the desire for it is precisely, can the mind in its actuality be overcome?

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Yes, sure there is a connection -- a diametrically opposite view. And the fact that we are all brought up in the Biblical tradition makes it particularly difficult for us to understand the Platonic or Socratic or Aristotelian tradition. One can also say that in a way the (inaudible) view -- although that's a very strong statement -- is closer to what we not only commonsensically feel today but what men commonsensically thought at all times, than the other.

Now where are we now?

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Reader: "If somebody assigns a larger share to somebody other than himself, as modest people are thought to do, for an equitable man is apt to take less than his due, this is a case of acting unjustly himself. And perhaps this too requires qualification. For the man who gave himself the smaller share may possibly have got a larger share of other good things, for example glory or intrinsic (inaudible) nobility."

Strauss: So is it a case of injuring oneself, of wronging oneself, if one gives the other man more than to oneself? But Aristotle says this is precisely the case of the gentleman. He does it all the time and he of course does not do injustice to himself; he gets something much better than money, namely praise or the noble itself.

Reader: "Also, the inference may be refuted by referring to our definition of acting unjustly. In the case supposed, the distributor has nothing done to him against his wish. Therefore, he does not suffer injustice merely because he gets the smaller share. At most he only suffers damage."

Strauss: So he who gives more than he owns at worst suffers harm, loss of property and whatever, but no injury, he has not been wronged.

Reader: "And it is clear that the giver as well as the receiver may be acting unjustly and the receiver is not doing so in all cases, for the charge of injustice attaches not to a man of whom it can be said that he does what is unjust, but to one of whom it can be said that he does this voluntarily, that is to say, one from whom the action originates, and the origin of the action lies in the giver and not in the receiver."

Strauss: The unjust distributor does not make the receiver's receiving an unjust act, at least not necessarily. If you as a bona fide party to a lawsuit get more than you deserve, by an unjust decision of the judge by which injustice you are unaware, then you do not act unjustly.

Reader: "Again, to do a thing has more than one meaning. In a certain sense a murder is done by the inanimate instrument or by the murderer's hand or by a slave acting under orders, but though these do what is unjust, they cannot be said to act unjustly."

Strauss: This is again this distinction which does not come out so well in the English translation -- say the hand or the knife does not commit an unjust act and yet it does an unjust thing. The unjust thing being murder. But it doesn't act unjustly -- well, of course, being inanimate it cannot act unjustly.

Reader: "Again, although if a judge given an unfair judgment in ignorance, he is not guilty of injustice, nor is the judgment unjust in the legal sense of justice. Though the judgment is unjust in one sense, for legal justice is different from the first justice."

Strauss: The first justice -- this is the same as what he called formerly the natural right, and the only other reference to the natural right occurs here, although interestingly enough under not the name. Now the natural right, or rather the right in the primary or the first sense, means here the simply or unqualifiably . Now if we have an unjust decision without subjective injustice, then justice in the ordinary sense would in no way be affected, but justice in the highest sense, yes. If the judge hands down an unjust decision but not guilty, then in one sense he is perfectly just and yet in a more important sense not he, but his actions, are unjust. And that is perhaps the most important consideration.

Reader: "Yet if he knowingly gives an unjust judgment, he is himself taking more than his share, either a favour or a vengeance. And the judge who gives an unjust judgment for these motives takes more than his due just as much as if he shares the proceeds of the injustice. For even a judge who assigns a piece of land on that condition does not receive land but money."

Strauss: Now this is a relatively simple case of the corrupt judge and unjust gain, and Aristotle uses here in very laconic language meaning by this example of the (inaudible) and money he means enlarging that, and it doesn't make any difference whether he gets any material advantage from a corrupt judge. It is perfectly sufficient if he exercises revenge on the man who condemns him and so on and so on.

Now let us read the passage again in the next chapter.

Reader: "Men think that it is in their power to act unjustly and therefore that it is easy to be just, but really this is not so. It is easy to lie with one's neighbor's wife or strike a bystander or slip some money into a man's hand, and it is within one's power to do these things or not, but to do them as a result of a certain disposition is not easy and is not in one's power. Similarly, men suppose it requires no special wisdom to know what is just and what is unjust, because it is not difficult to understand the things about which the law pronounces, but the actions prescribed by law are only accidentally just actions."

Strauss: Let us return here to 1129b, 12, a passage which we have discussed before. Near the beginning of the book, where he says

all the legal things are in a manner . . . what he says at the beginning, do you remember? Now he uses a much more restrained statement. The legal things, the things that satisfy the laws, are not the just things except accidentally, meaning they mean to be or are meant to be just but whether they are in fact is a long question.

The purpose of this particular chapter is very difficult to see. I hope you will see it.

Reader: "How an action must be performed, how a distribution must be made, to be a just action or a just distribution, to know this is a harder task than to know what medical treatment will produce health. Even in medicine, though it is easy to know what honey, wine, and hellebore, cautery and surgery are, to know how and to whom and when it requireth so as to effect a cure is no less an undertaking than to be a physician, and for this reason men think that the just man acts unjustly no less than justly, because the just man is not less but more able than any particular other to do an unjust thing. For example, he is able to lie with a woman or strike a blow and a brave man is able to throw away his shield and able to wheel to the right or left and run away. But to be a coward and to be guilty of injustice consists not in doing these things accidentally but in doing them from a certain disposition of mind, just as to be a physician and cure one's patients is not a matter of employing or not employing surgery or drugs, but in doing so in a certain manner."

Strauss: So it is at least as difficult to know the just things as to know the healthy things. I mean in its external and superficial way to know is easy, but to know them properly, technically, adequately, that is very difficult in such cases. There is here an analogy between the just man and the physician, an analogy with which you are familiar from Plato's Republic. And yet the Republic precisely makes clear and Aristotle too in other places the great difference between the physician or the technical man in general and the morally good man, and that would leave us now (inaudible), and so let us now complete this chapter.

Reader: "Claims of justice exist between persons who share in things generally seeking good and who can have too large a share or too small a share. There are persons who cannot have too large a share of these goods, such as probably the gods, and there are those who can derive no benefit from any share of them, namely the incurably vicious. To them all the things generally good are harmful but for others they are beneficial within limits, and this is the case with human beings."

Strauss: This is a kind of concluding remark to the effect that the just things are located between two extremes and we can no longer find them, between simple extremes, the gods in a way is the word used which he translates here probably is perhaps include, the gods on the one hand, and the men for whom nothing good can be good because of their complete corruption. The sphere in which the just things reside or are at home is not simple as these two

simple extremes limiting the sphere of the just things.

Now in the sequel he then turns to the question of equity, and we will take this up next time.

Lecture XXIV
Aristotle's Ethics, May 28, 1968

Strauss: The fifth book of the Ethics which we started last time is difficult not so much on account of the subject matter and what Aristotle says about it as because one doesn't know why Aristotle does speak of this particular subject here. This seems to be confused or disordered and it is very hard to believe (inaudible), but of course it might not have been Aristotle, but the fate of the (inaudible), and for this no human being can be held responsible.

Now we come now to the section . . .

(The tape is blank for a section here.)

Strauss: . . . distinction and it is very important whether the action is voluntary or not. Take the case of a man who does not return a deposit in time, because he is prevented by kidnappers from doing so, so in one sense he does not keep his part of the contract, and it is an unjust act, and yet he cannot be strictly held to have committed an unjust act, and this leads to a distinction between strict law and equitable law, as the Roman distinction. The Greeks have a similar distinction -- the Greek word is *epieikia*, of which Aristotle will speak right at the beginning of the chapter.

Let us first have another look at the Rhetoric, and the simplest thing would be if Mr. _____ would read us a few passages -- Book I, Chapter 13, sections 11-14.

Reader: "We have said that there are two kinds of just and unjust actions, for some are written but others are unwritten, and have spoken of those concerning which the laws are explicit, of those that are unwritten there are two kinds, one arises from an excess of virtue or vice which is followed by praise or blame, honor or dishonor, war. For instance, to be grateful to a benefactor, to render good for good, to help one's friend and the like, and the other kind contains what is omitted in the special written law. For that which is equitable seems to be just, and equity is justice that goes beyond the written law. These omissions are sometimes involuntary and sometimes voluntary on the part of the legislator. Involuntary when it may have escaped their notice, voluntary when the unable to define for all cases, they are obliged to make a universal statement, is not applicable to all but only to most cases. And whenever it is difficult to give a definition owing to the infinite number of cases, as for instance the size and kind of an iron instrument used in wounding, for life would not be long enough to reckon all the possibilities. If then knowing that definition is possible, then legislation is necessary, one must have recourse to general terms, so that if a man wearing a ring lifts up his hand to strike or actually strike, according to the written law he is guilty of wrong-doing, but in reality he is not, and this is the case for equity."

Strauss: So there are two kinds of just things that are unwritten. Aristotle does not speak here of natural but of unwritten. The first are the things which are beyond, higher than, the law.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: For example, if someone is grateful to his benefactors, he is rewarded, praised, and so on.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: We will come to that and I will explain it. The first things are above the law, and the very first example is that of gratitude and if a reciprocation for kind actions, and it be made a law, there would no longer be gratitude. The obliged man who could sue him for proper behavior on the part of the man who may be nice. Gratitude is voluntary or it is not. And therefore by its very nature it cannot be legislated. And the same applies to the other things, helping friends. This is also hard to define, because friends, having friends, means of course also taking the side against the enemies -- not here the public enemies, but the private enemies, and this is (inaudible) the business of the judge or of the legislature to take sides in these kinds of troubles.

Now the second kind which is more important is (inaudible) unwritten just things, and this is what is omitted in the particular law, i.e., in the law of this particular city and which is as such the written law. This is done fundamentally because of the defects of every legislation, and we will speak of this in greater detail and with greater clarity in the coming chapter of the Ethics.

Reader: "We have next to speak of equity and the equitable and their relation to justice and to what is justice respectively. For upon examination it appears that justice and equity are neither absolutely identical nor generically different. Sometimes it is true we praise equity and the equitable man so much so that we even apply the word 'equitable' as a term of approval to other things besides what is just and use it as the equivalent of good, denoting by more equitable merely that a thing is better. Yet at other times when we think the matter out it seems strange that equitable should be praiseworthy if it is something different from the just. If they are different, the just or the equitable are not good. If both are good, they are the same thing. These then are the considerations more or less from which the difficulty as to the equitable arises."

Strauss: Now what is this difficulty? Aristotle refers here to Greek usage of a word which we translate by equitable, *epieikēs*, and this is also used in the sense of a nice or gentle man, one of the words the Greeks had for a gentleman, where it did not have the narrow meaning of the equitable man, but it included it. It is a part of man's virtue to be equitable and not merely just.

But this precisely raises the difficulty. We regard what is more equitable as better than what is merely just. Hence, is then the just not good or is the equitable not just? The alternative would be that both are identical, the just and the equitable, but this would make unintelligible usage, where one distinguishes between justice and the equitable.

Now I will read you a passage from Plato's Laws, which will be of some help in explaining this passage. 757d-e. That is a passage of crucial importance for the Laws as a whole. I believe I have referred to it before, but I will now take up one passage.

"Whereupon the city at any time must make this same object the aim of its legislation, not the advantage of a few tyrants or of one, of some form of democracy, but justice always. And this consists in what we have just stated, namely the natural equality given on each occasion to things unequal." Natural equality means of course here in fact inequality. Because if you treat by nature unequal things according to their nature, they will get unequal shares. "Nonetheless, it is necessary for every city at times to employ even this equality in a modified equality, if it is to avoid involving itself in interesting discord in one jurisdiction or another. For the equitable and considerate, wherever employed, is an infringement of the perfect and exact, and in contrary to strict justice." That means in the context one must also introduce arithmetical equality in the form of election by lot.

But this is quite remarkable. The equitable is an infringement of the perfect and exact just. In other words, the equitable is, we would be compelled to say, is an infringement of what is by nature just. We have spoken before of the natural equality, i.e., inequality.

You may remember the passage here -- we can have a look at it -- in 1136b, 32-34.

Reader: "Again, although if a judge has given an unfair judgment in ignorance, he is not guilty of injustice nor is the judgment unjust in the legal sense of justice."

Strauss: According to what is legally just.

Reader: "Though the judgment is unjust in one sense, for legal justice is different from the first justice."

Strauss: Here you have the same case again. Legal justice, the first justice -- again, justice in the passage of Plato, is the perfect and exact justice, what is by nature just. And the equitable is an infringement, an adaptation to what the human situation requires and a deflection from justice pure and simple. So this would lead us to say that the equitable is different from what is by nature right, according to both Plato and Aristotle. Is this

clear? This is of some importance.

Now let us see the solution which Aristotle suggests. 1137b, 7.

Reader: "Yet they are all in a manner correct and not really inconsistent. For equity, while superior to one sort of justice, is itself just, it is not superior to justice as being generically different. Justice and equity are therefore the same thing and both are good though equity is the . . ."

(The tape was changed at this point.)

Strauss: . . . and men begin from barbarism again, where you cannot reasonably expect any civility, civilization. An example which you find in Plato of this early barbarism is the cyclotoc society, you know these Homeric one-eyed brutes. This is what you have at the beginning. And he takes a certain (inaudible) development until the minimum conditions for justice are fulfilled. Classical natural right, to repeat, presupposes the doctrine of providence and presupposes the doctrine of a perfect beginning. This doctrine of the perfect beginning is not the Platonic-Aristotelian teaching, and therefore it is not so clear and simple as the doctrine would seem to be in Thomas Aquinas.

Student: What is the difference between Aristotle's view of equity and the view which you read from the Laws? It would seem to be the opposite, Aristotle talking about equity as something higher than simply just . . .

Strauss: But we have seen in an earlier passage in the Ethics where Aristotle makes the distinction between the just, what is legally just, and what is just in the first sense and where the just in the first sense is also the severe uncompromising justice.

Student: And equity lies somewhere between those?

Strauss: For Aristotle, in the section on equity, equity is clearly an improvement on the positive law. In other words, the equitable position is better than from the mere inference from the text, or the case of law, to the matter on hand.

Student: Putting those two sections together then, the question would seem to be, what is the relation between the first justice and what the lawgiver does.

Strauss: The first justice is not one that is dependent on the lawgiver. That would be something like natural right, intrinsically right. This difficulty which you referred to is the one regarding Aristotle's teaching on natural right altogether. Perhaps the passage in itself is interpretable, but if you raise the question why it comes up in this context, then you see how immense is the difficulty.

So if there are no further questions, I would like to do now my sworn duty and return the rest of the papers.

(There is quite a bit of discussion about individual student papers.)

Strauss: We should take the most important passages from Book VI about this question -- what is the cognitive status of the moral principles according to Aristotle? How do we know that magnanimity is noble and that this and this is a magnanimous action and so on? And these are chiefly the passages dealing with moral virtue, the relation of moral virtue and phronesis, practical wisdom. We will do that next time.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I inferred this from these examples implied in this section. That there must be some conditions which the polis must fulfill if it is to keep together at all.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: I said equity does not require such a standard. The standard for equity is the intention of the legislator. I mean while it is easy to bring together equity with natural law, that is what Thomas Aquinas does, but I don't think this is justified by the Aristotelian text.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: In a way he must, if he wants to have a workable society he must . . .

Another student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: He speaks quite a few times . . . well, let us see in this edition which has a reasonably decent index under the Greek word for punishment, how often he speaks of it -- 10 or 12 times. Surely he speaks about it, but you are interested in something else which is justification, and why this punishment was a reasonable action.

In Plato we have this developed doctrine -- punishment is defensible only either -- well, its primary purpose is betterness or in hopeless cases for eradication. I mentioned this on an earlier occasion in this course. Aristotle is much more satisfied with a "naive" (inaudible). There is a dissatisfaction on the part of the sufferer. The sufferer must be compensated for that dissatisfaction. One can develop that. Aristotle has never done that, but I know it from Hugo Grotius for example that there is a certain pleasure that the harmed man enjoys from seeing his harmer punished. Hanged, drawn and quartered, or only put into jail, that depends on taste and occasion, but generally speaking this was formerly taken for granted, that punishment is not merely a measure improving the character of the criminal, but also for let us say giving some emotional satisfaction -- is that word acceptable to you?

Student: I would think the polis would also want some of that emotional satisfaction?

Strauss: Sure, but the polis also owes something to its citizens. If the polis is emotionally satisfied as a whole, its members are all emotionally dissatisfied. This is not a good thing, as Aristotle says against Plato. If all the citizens are unhappy, and yet the polis as a whole should be happy, this doesn't work because happiness is not like odd numbers. $3 + 5$ is 8, an even number, but you cannot compose happiness out of unhappy parts.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Sure, but the polis of course comes over the whole thing and doesn't permit the individual harmed to be the sole judge of what emotional satisfaction he wants. The polis determines what emotional satisfaction is due to him. So let us say not drawn and quartered, but only hanged until he is dead.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: Aristotle does not speak of that as far as I remember, but it is a very Hobbian thought. But I don't think he emphasizes that. But without punishment people will -- without punishment in the background and therefore without potential punishment, and therefore also from time to time actual punishment, people will be uncontrollable. That is as obvious for Aristotle as it is for Plato. Punishment is an indispensable institution. In other words, the polis is necessary as a coercive institution. He uses very strong terms when he speaks of the defects of paternal upbringing. The paternal discipline lacks the coercive force which the polis with its laws (inaudible), and the father is also frequently very compassionate with his good-for-nothing son, and the polis is not famous for its compassion, at least in olden times.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But still the harmed man is also a man.

Student: The victim.

Strauss: Yes.

Student: But why should the basis of punishment come from the satisfaction that he gets from seeing another man harmed. This seems to be an encouragement of this sort of phenomenon. As far as I am concerned, it is an ignoble aspect of human nature.

Strauss: You aren't the only one who says it. Plato himself says it at least through the mouth of Protagoras, and not only Protagoras, but also elsewhere. A reasonable man punishes only for a reasonable purpose. A reasonable purpose would be to improve the lawbreaker. This would be so, and the other merely to get it out of your system. That is clear. But Aristotle remains closer to ordinary mankind, as he does in so many other ways, by simply saying that people would think that if they cannot harm those that harm them, nor do well to those who did well to them, they would

regard themselves as slaves. Slavish condition. This kind of satisfaction in good or ill is necessary for a healthy life. And Aristotle would say to Plato probably if he can figure out an argument (inaudible . . .), you aim too high, Plato. This is there and will always be there. To say nothing of other problems which come into Plato's doctrine of punishment. The Platonic doctrine would lead to the consequence that the incorrigible lawbreaker (inaudible) throw him out of the city or perhaps he will be killed. What will you do with that? There were no theories as we have today which say that there is no man which cannot be improved. They took the harder line. They say the hardened criminals as black sheep where nothing could be done.

Student: That is not so much a defect in Plato's theory as it is perhaps a difference of understanding . . .

Strauss: It is a defect of the theory for the following reason. Let us assume we have a murderer -- not a man who killed another man in anger but a real murderer, premeditated murder. Raskolnikov. And then Raskolnikov as you all know, as soon as he had this bit of money, saw that it was a very foolish thing for him to do and he would have been very grateful to get rid both of the money and of the guilt. Now why this man should be sent to Siberia for 10 to 20 years instead of to the executioner, because he has learned his lesson in Moscow or wherever it was. And now let us take the case of the thief, petty thief, who commits one act of petty thievery after the other and never goes through this purgatory experience through which Raskolnikov went. He's an incorrigible criminal. According to this Platonic principle, he must be thrown out to the woods. And whereas Raskolnikov will be accepted in good graces. That is very uncommonsensical, and we simply say that we accept it in good graces. We say that we consider in establishing crimes not only the degree of guilt of the criminal, but also the quality of the act. Is it something like murder or is it petty theft -- petty theft is such a trivial thing. At least no civilized man could think of hanging a man for petty theft, even if he commits it fifty times. But still, the Platonic discussion as he stated is open to this question; for Aristotle there would be no difficulty to say of course, we have to consider the degree of guilt as well as the degree of the damage.

Student: The averroistic doctrine interpretation on the passage of natural right -- what place in the doctrine of natural right does the best regime have?

Strauss: That is hard to say. (Inaudible . . .) (The tape was changed at this point.) . . . which because of its rationality was not universally observed. There is a law which is universally observed, not of course by all individuals, but by all political societies, and these laws meet the minimum requirement. He enumerates these, and these correspond more or less to what I spoke of earlier about this passage.

So generally speaking there is no natural law in the Stoic-Thomastic sense of the word -- either in Plato or Aristotle, or in the Averroistic tradition.

That is the peculiarity of that Latin tradition, one can say. Latin Stoics were of course Greeks also. But the Stoics had a great influence on Roman thought, and in particular Roman legal thought.

Student: Well, then is Marsilius just silent when he speaks about the best regime when speaking of justice . . .

Strauss: Explicitly yes, but if one reads it more carefully, I think one gets a certain notion of what he understands by the best regime. It would be a city aristocratically governed. That is at least the result of my last reading.

So then we meet again for the last class.

Lecture XXV
Aristotle's Ethics, May 30, 1968

I repeat to you the main points made by Aristotle in the Nicomachean Ethics heretofore. There is one and only one highest good which Aristotle calls happiness. And the core of it is virtue. So this is one side of the matter.

The other side is that happiness, although its core is virtue, is of a higher rank than virtue. Happiness is something worthy of reverence, whereas virtue is something worthy of praise.

Now at any rate, given the close connection of happiness and virtue, it is necessary to find out what virtue is. And the answer given is that virtue as well as its opposite are habits of preferring or choosing. Therefore the key question now is what is choosing? Election? Election proves to be a kind of the voluntary or spontaneous, namely that kind that is preceded by deliberation. Again, deliberation is a kind of inquiry, namely that kind that deals with what we or I can do now and with things regarding which exact foresight is not possible. And from this it follows that there is no deliberation regarding letters or shoes, shoemaking, but there is deliberation regarding seafaring as well as medicine.

Deliberation always presupposes an end which is no longer subject to deliberation. The generals do not deliberate as to whether they want to win the battle. They deliberate on how they may win the battle. Deliberation ultimately presupposes natural ends, imposed on man by his nature, and ends which are in no way subject to deliberation. And these ends can be taken together under the heading happiness. No man deliberates as to whether he wishes to be happy. That he wishes anyway. He deliberates as to the ways and means toward happiness.

So then Aristotle says accordingly that choice has to do with what leads to the end whereas wishing is concerned with the end itself. This implies, and this is in a way the most important point, that choice has to do with what is within our power. Whether we desire happiness or not is not within our power. We desire it naturally. But whether we think our happiness and seek it along this way or along that way depends on our decision. And that is for which we are responsible.

This is the point which Aristotle makes -- we are responsible for our actions and therefore also for our virtues and vices. Now the virtues and the vices are the outcomes of previous actions. And he criticizes here the view that all vice is due to ignorance. Socrates seems to have said this. For if vice is due to ignorance, it would not be voluntary. But vice is voluntary, because if vice were not voluntary, virtue would not be voluntary. And the same people are perfectly willing to shift their responsibility for their vices to their environments and these people are very unwilling to shift their responsibility for their virtues to their environment.

Now the voluntariness of vice does not mean that a man intends primarily and per se to be vicious, but rather in the following manner, and this is the way in which Thomas Aquinas explains it. If someone wishes to take a walk in the heat of summer knowing that he would perspire, the consequence is that he wishes to perspire. So the vicious man does not wish to be vicious. He wishes to have say money, power, but he knows that he cannot get the power and the money in the seemingly easy way in which he wants to get it, except by committing crime. Therefore, he is fully responsible for the crimes. A man who is perspiring in July, in the midday noon heat of July, is fully responsible for his perspiring. No one wishes to be sick, but many men wish to eat in a manner leading to sickness. They are responsible for their sickness. They wish to be sick, not primarily, but implicitly. To some extent there exists even responsibility for bodily defects. If say someone becomes obese because he does not take bodily exercises, then he is responsible for his being obese. He can be blamed for being obese.

Aristotle rejects the view that virtue or vice are not chosen, but imposed on man by nature. According to this view, everything depends on being well-borne. If you are well-borne, you will be virtuous; if you are ill-borne, you will be vicious, and nothing can be done about it. Aristotle rejects this view as incompatible with our ordinary understanding of such matters.

Now let us turn to 1114b, 25 or 26. That is the end of this discussion and let us read it.

Reader: "We have then now discussed an outline of the virtues in general and indicated their genus, namely that it is a mean and a habit. Having shown that they render us apt to do the same actions as those by which they are produced, and to do them in the way in which right reason may enjoin, and that they depend on ourselves and are voluntary. But our habits are not voluntary in the same way as our actions are. Our actions we can control from beginning to end, and we are conscious of them at each stage. But our habits on the other hand, though we can control their beginning, each separate addition to them is imperceptible, as is the case with the growth of a disease. Though they were voluntary in that we were free to implore our capacities in the one way or the other."

Strauss: Aristotle has in mind -- if you have acquired the habit of drinking too much, then the mere resolve to become sober will not be very helpful, because the habit is ingrained by now, and yet you are responsible for that habit because you acquired it at a time when you were still not yet habituated. You chose the whiskey bottle in preference to a wiser course.

Now this is the conclusion of this first section of Book III, and then Aristotle turns to a new subject, and we may read first the beginning.

Reader: "But to resume, let us now discuss the virtues separately saying what they are, the class of objects to which they are related, and how they are related to them. In so doing, we shall also make it clear how many virtues there are."

Strauss: So Aristotle has spoken in general about the virtues and this was, as he called it, an outline of what virtue is. But this outline is as such incomplete. The completion will be supplied by the discussion of the various particular virtues of which he will speak in the rest of Book III, IV, and Book V. And then he says, while this discussion of the particular virtues, we will find out how many of the particular virtues there are. Aristotle does not give a deduction of the virtues from a single unitary principle. Say he does not try to show since virtues are the mean and they are habits, there must therefore be these and these and only these virtues. He proceeds in an opposite manner in the Politics when he speaks of the various regimes. There he makes a general schema of what kind of regime there can be and from there it follows that there can be only six and these and only these six regimes, namely rule of one, rule of a few, and rule of the many, and in each case either good or bad. Then you get six. There is no equivalent to that in the Ethics. And therefore what Aristotle does here is simply to look around and see what kinds of virtues we find, and then after we have exhausted the whole sphere, then we know how many virtues there are.

That of course leads to all kinds of difficulties -- to mention only the most striking point -- piety is not a virtue mentioned here, and which implies that piety is not a virtue for Aristotle. And he does not give us any reasons here; we have to figure that out by ourselves. This is a good subject for a paper incidentally. But one would have to have read the Politics also to answer this question.

Aristotle at any rate begins now the discussion of the particular virtues with courage or manliness. Why does he begin with courage? He doesn't tell us. We have to find out. We get some help in this enterprise from the first book of the Laws, where he gives an order of the virtues according to rank, beginning also with courage, and leading up to wisdom, so the general way is the same thing which Aristotle does in the Ethics, and this first book of the Laws would be of some use to answer the question. But of course one has to study above all the Aristotelian text.

Now let us read a few passages from the discussion of courage.
1115a, 24.

Reader: "What then are the fearful things in respect of which courage is displayed?"

Strauss: Aristotle has shown that courage has to do with the right posture towards fears, but not all fears are relevant here. If someone fears ignominy, then he is not a coward. And so Aristotle is from now on trying to give a positive answer.

Reader: "What then are the fearful things in respect of which courage is displayed? I suppose those which are the greatest, since there is no one more brave in enduring danger than the courageous man. Now the most terrible thing of all is death, for it is the end, and when a man is dead, nothing, neither good nor evil, can befall him anymore. But even death, we can hold, does not in all circumstances offer opportunity for courage. For instance, we do not call a man courageous for facing death by drowning or disease? What form of death then is the test of courage? Presumably that which is the noblest?"

Strauss: In Greek that is in the form of a question.

Reader: "Now the noblest form of death is death in battle. It is encountered in the midst of the greatest and most noble of dangers, and this conclusion is borne out by the principle on which public honors are bestowed in cities and under monarchies."

Strauss: Now Aristotle uses here more than once in this whole discussion a word which we may translate by 'it is sought to be.' For Aristotle (inaudible) what is generally thought to be the case, and following this line he says the brave man, the locus of the brave man's bravery, is war. The highest kind of courage is that on the battlefield.

Now in the commentary Aristotle's thought is explained as follows. Men have come to agree on this, that they exalt and magnify to the highest degree him who sustains death in war. There is a universal agreement among men, at least among all men competent to judge in this manner. The same is true not only of such primitive peoples, but is also true of such civilized peoples as the Greeks. And one can draw the general conclusion from this point that the principles of morality are always generally accepted views, whereas if you look only at the posture of the soul, there is no reason why one should say the warrior is brave, whereas the explorer or even the man on the sickbed, is not brave. That is Plato's argument why he extends the sphere of courage so that he covers the whole ground, all fears and even all pleasures, and so the distinction of courage and moderation disappears.

Aristotle tries to remain loyal and faithful to the phenomena, the phenomena of the judgments as they are made in the cities, especially by the most authoritative men in these cities.

Let us then turn to 1115b, 17.

Reader: "The courageous man then is he who endures or fears the right things and for the right purpose and in the right manner and in the right time and who shows confidence in a similar way. For the courageous man feels and acts as the circumstances merit and as principle may dictate, and every activity aims at the end that corresponds to the disposition of which it is the manifestation. So it is therefore with the activity of the courageous man. His courage is noble, for its end is nobility, for a thing is defined by its end. Therefore, the courageous man

endures the terrors and bears the deeds that manifest courage for the sake of that which is noble."

Strauss: Now what is then the circumstances as we would say, using a word which is not Aristotelian, but which corresponds perfectly to what Aristotle means. It depends on the circumstance. For example, in some cases to run away may be a virtuous act. Think of the case of Josef and the wife of (inaudible). It depends on the circumstances. One of the most important considerations is the end. What is the end of the courageous man? What does Aristotle say here? So some men in other words may not run away, but the end which he has in mind is that he doesn't wish to be shot in the back by military police. That is not a courageous man; that is a prudent man. What is the end of the courageous man, as Aristotle says here?

Student: Nobility.

Strauss: Yes, the intrinsic nobility. Because it is noble to expose one's life in this situation, and for no other reason does he do it.

But this end is important also for the following consideration, because in order to determine how to act here and now, and act well here and now, he has to look at the end, the end being the noble. By the noble, he is then able to say under these circumstances it is proper to run away, whereas under those circumstances it is proper to stay.

Now there seems to be some manifest inadequacy about this statement. One has to consider whether one has been commanded to hold a position at all costs, or you have been commanded to retire after having delayed the enemy's advance. Then you may retire after this has been achieved. Now if we look at these considerations -- should this hill be held at all costs or should it be abandoned after a certain time. If we look into these deliberations, we see that they will be practical and (inaudible) considerations which are in themselves not moral. This doesn't mean that they are immoral, but they are amoral. Now these considerations in their turn are subject to a broader consideration which we call the political consideration. Is it wise to continue that war at all? The individual fighter is to obey and within very narrow limits he nevertheless must make his own decisions. But the end is in both cases, whether he simply obeys or whether he makes an independent decision, the end is in both cases what? -- if we look at the concrete situation as I tried to sketch it. At what does he ultimately look, the brave man? In order to decide whether to stay or to run away?

Student: He looks more toward victory.

Strauss: But behind the victory there is a broader consideration. Some victories are pyrrhic and therefore not what you would choose. The foundation of the city. The foundation of the city -- that would seem to be the end. Now Aristotle is absolutely silent about that in his analysis of bravery, the only end which he mentions is the noble as noble. One could raise the question, but if the sal-

vation of the city is the highest consideration, is there then sufficiently room left for bravery as a moral virtue? There is the statesmen, and below them the generals, and below them the lower officers who determine what is to be done on that particular hill on that particular day. Where does moral virtue come in? So they determine what is the right thing to do. And where does moral virtue come in?

Student: That seems to make courage sound more like a form of justice, in generally speaking about obeying the law rather than . . .

Strauss: I will give you an example suggested by Plato in the first or second book of the Laws. He discusses something here very different from the battlefield, namely symposia, in the Greek sense and not in the present American sense. And in the symposia one must be a leader, ruler, of the symposia or people get out of hand. And in this connection Plato mentions the following example. A man may possess the art of the pilot, and yet may not be able properly to exercise it, although he is in perfect command of that art, because he gets seasick. So there are two ingredients needed -- we must have the knowledge of the art, and he must have the submission of his intestines -- two reasons. The fighting man must know in a manner the art of war -- in a manner because it is different in the case of a general than a private. And he must not suffer cold feet. That is the other point and both come somehow together.

The key point which is so important is that Aristotle does not mention the salvation of the city explicitly as the ends, the noble, with which the brave man is concerned.

Let us read a few more passages -- 1116a, 10.

Reader: "As has been said then, courage is the observance of the mean in relation to things that inspire confidence or fear in the circumstances stated. And it is confidence (inaudible) because it is noble to do or base not to do so. But to seek death in order to escape from poverty, or the pangs of love, or from pain or sorrow, is not the act of a courageous man, but of a coward."

Strauss: And then he gives the reasons. To choose death in order to avoid poverty, and the reason is given in the sequel . . . Softness to avoid the toilsome things, and the brave is not soft. The man who commits suicide does not do it for the sake of the noble, but in order to escape from an evil, and therefore he is a coward.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: But that is not primarily what we mean by intellectual courage.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: And also if you take the situation -- did it interfere with the younger Socrates there, (inaudible), more moderate than courageous. And was Socrates more courageous than moderate? Yes, that is true, that shows some (inaudible . . .). But it is not so manifest as in Lucretius, where the truth that the wicked of the universe will perish again is thought to be a terrible truth and almost unbearable, and bearable only for philosophers. Socrates has a kind of materialistic notion, which in Nietzsche's reaction to it, in the 19th century, led to the phenomenon (inaudible.).

(Inaudible) .. you forget in a way what resignation is implied in the notion of philosophy. The philosopher is the man who has resigned the greatest hopes which all other men have, and to that extent he is already on the other side, and therefore after he has made this act of resignation, philosophy is simply for him to be happy. At one time in his life he had to make this terrible sacrifice of the greatest hopes.

Student: (Inaudible.)

Strauss: That is not the main point, the retiring from society. The main point is to become reconciled to such things as the Plague, and not as an occurrence which takes place here and there but as a necessary end of the world. And we have today generally this posture. We are told by physics that the world has come into being, the world as we know it, and will perish again, but this has taken such a long long time, the world in which humans come in, and it will take billions of years until the human race will perish. But one can say what is a matter of a billion of years is not reasonable for a subject of worry. I mean one should worry about what happens in the next two years or during one's lifetime. And I think that is the difference precisely between a philosopher and an administrator.

(Inaudible . . .) is that he liberates his (inaudible) from the greatest horrors to which man is exposed, but that is only half of the story. There is also the other side to which I have referred.

Now after having discussed the first and primary virtues, courage and moderation, Aristotle turns to the "higher" or more sophisticated virtues. The first which he mentions is liberality. Now this follows immediately in moderation. There is a connection between moderation dealing with the bodily desires and satisfactions, and liberality dealing with wealth, because wealth is the means for getting (inaudible). Now let us read a few passages. 1120a, 18 following.

(The remainder of Lecture XXV is unrecorded.)